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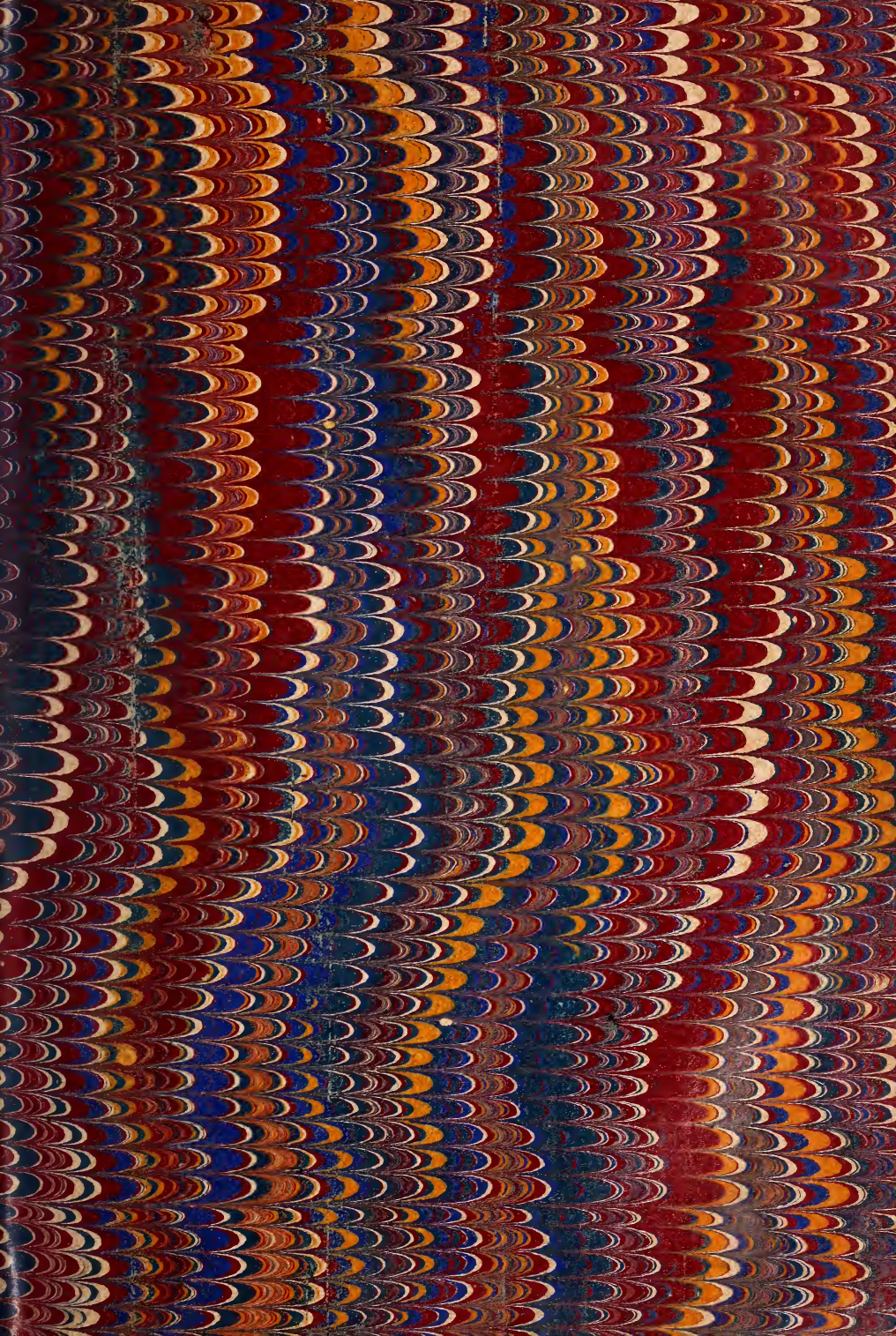
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



PULLMAN'S REPLY TO TALMAGE.

A REVIEW OF A SERMON BY THE REV. T. DE WITT
TALMAGE, ENTITLED "THE BIBLE
VS. UNIVERSALISM."

BY

REV. JAMES M. PULLMAN,

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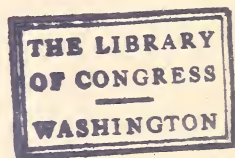
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SERMON.

“THE LORD WILL NOT CAST OFF FOREVER.”

Old Testament.

“GOD WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, AND TO COME UNTO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.”

New Testament.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.—GALATIANS vi., 7.

OBSERVING by a notice in the papers a week ago yesterday, that Rev. Mr. Talmage, of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, had announced as his subject for the Sunday morning following, “Universalism *versus* the Bible,” I took measures to have a *verbatim* report of that sermon made, and I propose, this morning, to review it.

The question of the final destiny of mankind is one of the supremest importance. The human mind can consider no subject that at all approaches this in interest. What is to be the result of the creation and existence of the human race? On this question turn our ideas of immortality, our views of the character of the Creator of the Universe, and our conception of our own duty. And as it is a subject of such transcendent concern, it ought

to be approached in the most earnest, serious, candid, and reverent spirit.

I had hoped that when the *verbatim* report of Mr. Talmage's sermon reached me, I should find in it an able, scholarly, comprehensive, earnest, courteous presentation of whatever argument may be brought from the Scriptures against the doctrine of the ultimate extinction of sin, and the final complete victory of God over evil. In this expectation I have been entirely disappointed. I have before me, in this report, simply the old-time, sectarian harangue ; not addressed to the understanding of the hearer, but filled with *ad captandum* appeals to passion and to prejudice, in the preacher's well-known and peculiar style. I have before me a sermon, which, from the adroit substitution of a false for a real issue at the beginning, to the repulsive exhortation with which it closes, deals with its professed subject in a manner and spirit sadly below the decencies of the occasion, and the momentous gravity of the matter.

I can not, therefore, present to you this morning the subject of Universalism in the fashion which best accords with the grandeur of the theme. I have promised to review this sermon of Mr. Talmage, and I shall keep my word. Regretting, therefore, that he has not made more of his material, and regretting, also, that he has not directed his arguments against real Universalism, but has spent his strength in a battle with shadows, I will proceed to discuss, not what he might better have said, but what he *did* say—unfortunately for his cause. And it may be permissible to remark, in preface, that if, in following Mr. Talmage through, I should unfortunately catch, in some instances, something of the spirit and tone of the

discourse which I review, my desire to meet the preacher on his own ground must be my justification.

I entertain entire respect for all who honestly and intelligently differ from me in religious belief, and I have due and even tender regard for the feelings of those who, through misapprehension or otherwise, look upon Universalism as a dangerous heresy. I shall not willingly say anything here this morning to wound the sensibilities of such. The freedom of belief which I claim for myself, I freely accord to all men. For those who disagree because of false impressions, and for those who disagree because in their deliberate and candid judgment the weight of argument is against Universalism, I entertain a frank and cordial esteem. But I can not regard the preacher of this sermon as the representative of either of these classes. He is *sui generis*—of his own kind; and as such I must deal with him, although I hope in a kindly spirit. My creed binds me to exercise charity toward all men, and certainly here is an occasion for it. I have also a most profound and entire conviction that the preacher of this sermon will ultimately be saved, however unpromising the matter may look at present; but as to his *work*, as represented in this discourse, I gladly hold with the Apostle Paul, "If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

Mr. Talmage's sermon sets out with this statement :

"It is not more certain that you are here this morning, not more certain that there is a window there, not more certain that this over me is a ceiling, not more certain that that is a carpet, than it is certain that God has declared destruction to the *finally impenitent*."

Long may the preacher of the Brooklyn Tabernacle have a ceiling over his head, a carpet beneath his feet, a window through which God's light may shine into his soul ; and long may he be spared to fling such harmless declarations against the doctrine of God's impartial grace ! For I ask you to observe, that by the use of that phrase, "*the finally impenitent*," Mr. Talmage has begged the whole question in his very first sentence. "The *finally impenitent*." There is just the point of the debate. Universalism asserts that there will be *no* "*finally impenitent*." Every sinful soul will be brought to repentance. God has declared destruction to the sinful disposition, but salvation to the sinning soul. The soul is saved by being made righteous ; the sinful propensity is burned out and destroyed. To speak of an "impenitent" soul as being "saved" is a contradiction in terms—and Universalism has never been guilty of such confusion. Universalism maintains the *final* salvation of the impenitent—those who are impenitent *now*, or who may remain impenitent through unknown periods of time ; but it denies the possibility of the final, that is, the unending, eternal, impenitence of any human soul. It opposes that "orthodoxy" which teaches that God will allow the sin to finally destroy the sinner ; and holds that no soul can forever resist the infinite persuasion of Almighty God.

Mr. Talmage goes on to say that this declaration ought to excite fear, and that Universalism comes out and tries to quell this fear. He says that "Universalism wants to sew two pillows under his arm sleeves, and two under those of each of his hearers." But he declares that Universalism shall not do it. He says :

"God helping me, I shall this morning put before my

soul and yours the absorbing facts, and shall try to snatch every pillow of false peace from under the arms of my auditors, and show them what the dangers are, that they may one and all escape."

Then he goes on in these words :

"Suppose there was some real danger ahead, and a man comes into your house and says, 'There is no peril, there is no need of your preparing for it; there is none.' But another neighbor comes in and says, 'There is a peril, but I know how you can escape it, and I have come to deliver you.' Which is the best friend and best neighbor? Why, the latter, of course."

Now, if a man comes into my house to warn me of a danger which actually exists, he is my friend. But if a man comes to my house in the night, when I am asleep, and awakens me with a false statement of a danger which does not exist—if he comes and tells me that my house is on fire when it is not; and conceals from me that at the bank, where I have my funds, the thieves are at work, that there is the immediate danger—if he comes to warn me of a false danger, to excite me with a false alarm, so that I shall overlook and not prepare for the real peril,—then he is not my friend, but is a dangerous, misleading enemy, deluding me under the guise of friendship.

The danger that Universalism perceives awaiting every sinful man, is the danger of living a life of sin. Not alone because it brings pain, but because sin is in itself intrinsically evil, and ever to be feared and shunned. A dangerous disease attacks a man's eyes—but it is not the pain alone that constitutes the danger of that disease. It is the peril of losing his eyesight, of going all his days in blindness—that is the calamity to be feared. If the surgeon simply gives alleviation for the pain, and allows the

disease to run on, he is not a friend but an enemy—the more dangerous as he is believed and trusted.

Mr. Talmage goes on to say :

“ There are two branches of Universalism, one made up of the Restorationists, who admit a limited punishment after death. * * But the vast majority of Universalists I have met with in the world, believe that there is no future punishment at all, and that whatever may have been our character in this world, the moment we step across the line into the future world we are completely happy. People need not tell me that this is not Universalism—I take it not from books, I take it from my own observation, and from frequent and constant conversation with men who have adopted such rules.”

Generally, the best way to find out what a man believes is to ask him. And when he tells you, it is not always safe to say “ Pshaw ! that is not what you believe ; you think it is, you think you believe this, but you really believe *that*.” I desire to say, in this connection, simply this, that the distinction made by this preacher between Restorationists and Universalists does not exist. And I desire to add, that in my opinion, this preacher knows it. Universalists are Restorationists, and Restorationists are Universalists. There is no difference ; there is no split or schism in the church on this question.

Mr. Talmage says he “ didn’t take his understanding of Universalism from books.” He should have taken it from books. Where else ought he to get it except from authorized publications. Observe the disingenuousness of his statement : “ The majority of Universalists I have met with in this world.” Now, the force of that

testimony depends upon the number of Universalists he has met with. If I should assert, with equal emphasis, that the majority of Hottentots I had met with believed in spooks, the universal prevalence of spook-theology among that race of beings must not be hastily inferred from my statement. It may transpire that I have never met any Hottentots except at Barnum's. Mr. Talmage's "vast majority of Universalists" has been made to order for this occasion, or else his credulity has been sadly imposed upon.

Now, if he really wishes to know what the doctrine of Universalism is, I can refer him to the Universalist creed. Since it is a creed so short that all can remember it, I will read it. It is called the Winchester Confession. It was adopted in the year 1803—before Mr. Talmage was born, I think. It was the belief of the Universalist Church long before it was put in this authoritative, tangible form, and it has been the belief of the Universalist Church ever since.

"ART. I. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind.

"ART. II. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will *finally* restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

"ART. III. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practice good works; for those things are good and profitable unto men."

That is the doctrine of Universalism. If Mr. Talmage wants to know what Universalism is, I refer him to this.

I refer him also to the literature of the church, ample in volume and succinct in statement. I refer him to Origen and Gregory, in the early church, and to the Ancient and Modern Histories of Universalism. No man need be in darkness as to what the doctrine of Universalism really is.

I ask you to observe, that in this most unworthy attempt to cast a slur upon Universalism by calling it what it is not, Mr. Talmage has simply set up a man of straw. He is welcome to the honors of any victory he may gain by such devices. Universalism is the belief, that "*Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap ;*" that "*Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished ;*" that "*He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons.*" Universalists believe this ; and so believing, believe also that God will finally restore the whole family of mankind to righteousness and obedience. The odium which Mr. Talmage attempts to cast upon Universalism by disingenuous misrepresentations, recoils upon himself. For what is effectual death-bed repentance but a remission of the sins of an entire life in a single instant of time—a translating of the hardened and unpunished soul out of the wickedness it has taught itself to love, immediately into the presence of the saints and the glory of God? When he preaches death-bed repentance, when he preaches complete instantaneous conversion, when he announces entire cessation of punishment at death and forever after, he preaches a doctrine, which, turn it how you will, denies all these solemn texts, breaks the relation of sowing and reaping, proclaims a God who lets the sinner go unwhipt of the Divine justice.

I might end this controversy here, for Mr. Talmage's sermon, from this place onward, is not directed against Universalism, but against a kind of Antinomianism, which, I think, must have been evolved from the dim recesses of the preacher's inner consciousness. Certainly there is nothing like it in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath. But while his argument is thus awry and of no earthly consequence so far as the common mind can apprehend it, he has nevertheless used certain illustrations, and adduced certain scripture passages, in such relation and application that a review of them may be profitable and expedient. For the sake of the Scripture, for the sake of your better understanding of it, and for the sake of God's divine truth, I shall follow him through.

He proceeds to say :

"I solemnly empanel all this audience as a jury. I shall this morning show you that Universalism is unscriptural, unreasonable, destructive of good morals, withering of all earnestness of soul-saving, and the means of eternal catastrophe to a great many."

Now, let us see what a kind of court we have in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Here is the audience as jury; here, in the person of the preacher, is the advocate, the lawyer; here is the Bible, the witness—that is all! Does that constitute a court of justice? Is there not something lacking in that court? What is lacking? Why, the defendant is lacking. If the defendant had been present in person, or by counsel, when that jury was empaneled, he would very likely have challenged some to the favor, and some for the principal cause. And not only is the defendant absent but the judge also.

And so it is evident—what would be evident without this illustration—that we have here, not a court of justice, not even a court of equity, but an inquisition. The defendant will not be heard. His case has been prejudged, and this shallow pretence of the forms of justice is merely put on to blind the people to the unrighteousness of the predetermined verdict.

He summons the witnesses to the court. And the first witness whom he calls up is Dives, the lost. He asks:

“Dives, is there a perdition?”—I have warned you that the question between the Universalists and this preacher is not whether there is a perdition, but whether there is an *endless* perdition.

“Dives, is there a perdition?” asks Mr. Talmage.

“Yes,” answers Dives, “I have just come from it; it is torment. I can not get anything to cool my tongue. I want a cup of water, and can’t get it. Do send word to my five brethren, that they go not into that suffering.”

“Now,” says Mr. Talmage, “Universalism tries to impeach this witness by saying ‘No; it is an allegory. Lazarus, the saved, is the Gentile converted; and Dives, who lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment, is the Jew whose spiritual privileges were cut off in this world.’ Preposterous!” says Mr. Talmage; “If the Lord Jesus Christ was going to make an allegory, he would not make one so imbecile as that.”

Now, I don’t enter into the question whether this is a proper allegory or not. I shall assume the Lord Jesus to be a better judge of what an allegory is than Mr. Talmage. And as the question at issue is not what kind of a hell Dives was in, but whether he is to remain there eternally, I shall enter into no controversy as to the

meaning of the parable, only referring Mr. Talmage to a sagacious saying of the wise Solomon : “ The legs of the lame are not equal ; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.”

I regret that I can't summon Dives from hell to be cross-examined. My influence with the authorities there does not seem to be as potent as that of Mr. Talmage. They have doubts and suspicions, I presume, about the return of one of their victims if he should fall into the hands of a Universalist. They have no such suspicions of the Tabernacle preacher. They feel sure that he will send Dives back. It must be, by the way, a refreshing thing for those who, according to Mr. Talmage's doctrine, are now confined in everlasting fire, to have him occasionally preach a sermon which necessitates calling witnesses from that sultry region. It would seem a very desirable temporary relief—although, judging from the tone of his sermon, I am afraid that Dives found the temperature of the Tabernacle uncomfortably warm even for him ; and he probably returned to his place of punishment considerably reconciled to his fate.

I can't ask Dives about this matter, and put the question whether the perdition he was in was an endless perdition ; whether there is any possible way of escape out of it. But I can summon three witnesses after Mr. Talmage's fashion. I can ask David, I can ask Jonah, and I can ask John about it.

I ask David :

“ Is there any escape from hell ? ” David answers :

“ Great is thy mercy towards me ; thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.”

I ask Jonah as to the perdition he was in :

“ Out of the belly of hell cried I ; * * the earth and her bars was about me for ever.”

“ How long did this ‘ forever ’ last ? ” I ask. Jonah answers : “ Three days and three nights.”

Mr. Talmage would doubtless desire to infer the hopeless condition of Dives from the statement, “ Between you and us there is a great gulf fixed ; ” and to accomplish this it is only necessary for him to borrow the slight and insignificant adverb, “ endlessly,” and prefix it to “ fixed ; ”—a begging of the whole question, to which he seems well accustomed. Grant him this slight boon—which it is cruel to deny to his necessity—and then, if the story be not a parable, he will leave Dives triumphantly “ fixed ” in hell forever. But what for ? What was his offense ? Why, he had been a rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. This is all that is alleged against him ; but, on Mr. Talmage’s principle of interpretation, this is enough ; the Divine Government imposes the penalty of everlasting torment in hell for such an offense. Lazarus, on the other hand, had earned the endless bliss of heaven by being a beggar, full of sores. No other virtue is ascribed to him. Such being Mr. Talmage’s view of the principles of the Divine Government, he should have withheld his fling at the “ unsavory, unwashed wretches ” of this life. They are on the right track ; they are qualifying themselves for Paradise !

Enough of this. The precise interpretation of this parable—for it is a parable—does not touch the issue now raised. Mr. Talmage should have shown that the suffering of Dives, whatever or wherever it was, was

endless, unbeneficial, hopeless ; to be terminated neither by salvation nor annihilation—to endure as long as God exists. Failing utterly to show this, he may remand his witness, while we listen to the averment of John the Revelator, that “death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them.”

Mr. Talmage says that he will not stop with this witness, but will bring documentary evidence in the parable of the Tares. He says, the righteous shine forth in their Father’s Kingdom—here again there is no question between us.

He goes on to ask, “Do you know how the Universalists have squeezed and distorted that passage? They have done so until they have made the furnace to be Jerusalem, and those who are to shine forth forever in their Father’s Kingdom are the Jews who didn’t happen to get killed in the war at the time the city was taken—an interpretation that would throw any audience into a convulsion of laughter, if the awfulness of the theme did not forbid merriment.”

I give this as a specimen of candid Mr. Talmage’s judicious criticism of Universalist interpretation. “They have squeezed and distorted this passage, till they have made the furnace to be Jerusalem,” sneers Mr. Talmage. But why not sneer at Isaiah, who uses precisely the same expression: “The Lord’s fire is in Zion, and his *furnace in Jerusalem.*” And although I never heard any Universalist give to this parable the exact interpretation which Mr. Talmage alleges, yet I hear Christ himself warning his followers to “flee to the mountains,” when the judgment described should come, not in the “end of the world,” as Mr. Talmage knows very well, but in “the end of this age;” and the evangelist who records the language has not noted that any “convulsions of laugh-

ter" followed the warning to escape, not from a far distant, but from an immediately impending judgment, which was to take place before the disciples should have "gone over the cities of Israel."

The "Jews who didn't happen to get killed in the war at the time the city was taken," as Mr. Talmage felicitously puts it, were the believing Christians, who held fast their profession in spite of persecution and false Christs, faithfully watched for the warning signs described by their Master, noted them in time, escaped the Jewish overthrow, and lived to assist in the establishment of their Father's Kingdom—the Christian dispensation. They "didn't happen to get killed," because they "happened" not only to believe in Christ, but to *obey* him implicitly; and I commend their faith and works to Mr. Talmage as a better security, both for time and eternity, than the mechanical, perfunctory, official faith, *sans* the "filthy rags" of righteousness, which constitutes in this sermon his final appeal.

The parable of the Tares unquestionably refers to the little germ of the Christian Church, then growing up in the midst of the decaying Jewish Church, subject to all the perils of persecutions without and of hypocrisy and faithlessness within incident to such a situation, and soon to be fiercely tested by the disorders and disasters attending the total overthrow of the Jewish Church and Polity—of which the central catastrophe was the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem. This catastrophe, which marked the tremendous transition from the Mosaic to the Christian faith, the most important and far-reaching event in the history of the world, was of importance enough, even in the minds of those who

dimly perceived its immense significance, to warrant and justify the strong language, the striking and vivid figures in which they describe it. The expression "furnace of fire" is tame and inadequate, compared with the bold and startling figures used by Christ himself to describe that great transition :

"The sun shall be darkened ; * * the moon shall not give her light ; * * the stars shall fall from Heaven ; * * the powers of the Heavens shall be shaken." These figures are taken from Old Testament writers, who use them to describe national catastrophes. But he goes on — "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in the Heavens, * * and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Thus did Christ himself describe the overthrow of the Mosaic and the establishment of the Christian dispensation ! and lest some subsequent Talmage should misunderstand him, and fall into "convulsions of laughter" over the majestic event, he specifies, in unmistakable terms, the *time* : "Now, learn a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So, likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.*" But Mr. Talmage's case, in this parable, turns upon the meaning of the "furnace of fire." It was incumbent on him, in order to justify his appeal to this "documentary evi-

dence," to show the endlessness of that fire, that it burned throughout all eternity, without either purifying or consuming its victims. This, of course, he has not done, and can not do.

The fire that burned up Mr. Talmage's first Tabernacle, he found to be literally unquenchable. The Brooklyn fire department could not put it out, yet, on the very spot where that unquenchable fire did its work, stands Mr. Talmage's new and greatly improved building, embracing in its construction all that was valuable in the old structure, together with many new and better ideas. Why will not Mr. Talmage himself learn a parable?"

The expression, "furnace of fire," is used often in the Bible, and as often quoted by Universalists as by others. It is an impressive and striking way of describing the Divine punishments. It is often called a "refining fire," a "purifying fire." Good men get into it—as witness Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—and stand it bravely. Bad men go into it, and feel the power of God's retribution, even to their bones and marrow. All men's works are tested by it; false work is burned up, and the false worker suffers loss,—“but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.”

Dismissing here Mr. Talmage's "documentary evidence," we turn again to his witnesses. And in adopting Mr. Talmage's method of bringing forward the testimony of the Scriptures, I desire to explain that I do it only to show you that he can be met and decisively answered on his own ground—not that I consider his method desirable. The old monks believed that the hedgehogs stole their grapes by rolling through the vines

and carrying off the fruit that stuck to their quills. Hedgehog controversialists roll through the Bible in the same way, and come out with such texts sticking to them as their temper and idiosyncrasies attract. But a handful of texts clutched at random from the Bible may as little represent the meaning of their authors, as a cart-load of bricks would represent the plan of the architect of the Brooklyn tabernacle.

But for the effect Mr. Talmage desired to produce upon a popular audience, it was necessary that he should choose texts rather for their sound than their significance. A certain proportion of smoke and brimstone was necessary; therefore he must resort to that book of the Bible whose florid figures are drawn from the smoking asphaltum pits of Palestine. As witness his interrogation of John—not John the Evangelist, but John the Revelator.

“John, is there a perdition?”—And John answers:

“They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. * * He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the angels, and of the Lamb. * * And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.”

Here Mr. Talmage has the terrifying figures that he wants; figures unmistakably drawn from the fiery overthrow of the cities of the plain, the smoke of whose destruction continued, it is affirmed, to ascend for ages, even down to the time of the apostles. But unfortunately for his purpose, both the original figure and the present metaphor unquestionably refer to punishments suf-

ferred in time and on the earth, and to national rather than individual calamities.

I ask John :

“ Who shall suffer this punishment ? ”—and he answers :

“ They who worship the beast and his image.”

I ask, “ What beast ? ”—and he answers :

“ The beast that rose up out of the sea, bearing seven heads and ten horns. * * Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast ; for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”

Now I hope that Mr. Talmage understands this, and can tell us the precise danger we are in. “ The beast with the seven heads and ten horns,” sounds a little like a description of the old Tabernacle as it appeared from the street. But that has already suffered that purgation of fire which its ugliness deserved ; and on the ruins has arisen a fairer structure : just as on its ruins of many an unsightly and unworthy life, a better life, shall, by God’s discipline and grace, be builded.

I will ask John a decisive question :

“ *Where* was this wine of the wrath of God to be poured out ? ”—and he answers :

“ I heard a great voice * * saying, * * Pour out the vials of wrath of God *upon the earth.*”

I will ask one more question :

“ What in your vision did you behold as the final result of the purpose of God and the work of Christ ? ”—and he answers :

“ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying ;

Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Next Mr. Talmage summons Paul :

"Paul is there any perdition?"—and Paul answers :

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.

And again :

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power."

Mr. Talmage has here again been true to his idea of selecting passages which will terrify in the sound, rather than in the significance. He has got his "flaming fire," and his "everlasting destruction." But he has overshot the mark once more. Everlasting *destruction* is one thing, and endless *undestruction* in interminable torments is another, and an entirely different thing. Mr. Talmage is not set for the defense of the doctrine of the *annihilation* of the wicked, but of their *endless duration* in endless torture. And if he seeks to evade this difficulty by claiming that this text means "banishment" from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power, he squarely contradicts the testimony of David, who says that such banishment is impossible :—

"If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there ;
if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there ;
if I take the wings of the morning, and fly to the
uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy
hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

Mr. Talmage has chosen the only passage in all Paul's

writings where the phrase "everlasting destruction" is used. And Mr. Talmage probably knows, or if he does not, a brief study of the writings of the most learned men of his own school of theology will teach him, that the word everlasting can not be relied on to prove the doctrine of endless punishment, because it derives its force from the object to which it is applied. Applied to God, it means unbeginning as well as unending duration; applied to hills and mountains, as it is in the Bible, it means indefinite duration; applied, as it is, to statutes, covenants, and priesthoods, long since abolished by God Himself, it means strictly limited duration; applied to punishment, it means whatever duration such punishment may be shown, by other and independent testimony, to have.

To make out his case against Universalism, it was incumbent on Mr. Talmage to prove by Paul that the wicked, at death, are plunged into hopeless, unbeneficial, unending torments, enduring as long as God Himself exists; but he has only introduced the phrase "everlasting destruction,"—which does not mean that, say that, or anything at all like that.

I will now ask Paul what the punishment of sin is?—and he answers :

"The wages of sin is death."

I ask him to define the death he means;—and he answers :

"To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

I ask him if the retributions of the Almighty are inexorable and unescapable;—and he answers :

"Indignation and wrath; tribulation and an-

guish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.”—
And again :

“ God will render to every man according to his deeds.”—And again :

“ He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done ; and there is no respect of persons.”—And again :

“ Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

I ask him why man was thus subjected to sin and its certain punishment ?—and he answers :

“ The creature was made subject to vanity, not of his own will, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope ; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

I ask him what provision has been made for this final deliverance ?—and he answers :

“ Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I ask him if this Divine provision is ample for the whole human race ?—and he answers :

“ As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—Again :

“ Christ Jesus * * gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

I ask : “ A ransom for *all*, even the worst sinners ? ”
—and he answers with emphasis :

“ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."—And again :

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

I ask : "It is true, then, that death will turn God's love for the sinner to hatred, and cut off all hope forever?"—and he answers :

"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

One more question : "What is the will of God in regard to the final salvation of all men?"—and he answers :

"God * * will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Mr. Talmage summons Isaiah, "Isaiah, is there any perdition?"—and Isaiah answers :

"Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

It is difficult to see that Mr. Talmage expected to prove by this witness. What the words quoted do prove may be best seen by reading the whole passage, which shows that the judgment was temporal destruction, not endless suffering : "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me ; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."

I will ask Isaiah one question : "What shall be the

final result of the divine government ?"—and he answers :

"The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

Being in the neighborhood, I will ask a question of Jeremiah, a witness whom it did not suit Mr. Talmage's purpose to call, although he has spoken very explicitly on this point. I ask : "Are the Divine punishments endless ?"—and Jeremiah answers :

"The Lord will not cast off forever ; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

Mr. Talmage summons David, and asks : "David is there a perdition ?"—and David answers :

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Mr. Talmage certainly knows two things about this quotation. First, that it does not touch the real issue between us, which is, not whether the wicked are turned into hell, but whether they are punished with immitigable, interminable tortures, continued as long as God exists ; and secondly, that the word "hell," as used by David and the other Old Testament writers, does not in any respect describe the kind of place which he is seeking to impress upon the minds of his hearers.

But as I have promised to follow him on his own method, I will question his witness.

I will ask David if the Divine punishments are endless ?—and he answers :

"The Lord will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever."

“What is the method of the Divine punishment?”

“If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting [not destroying] the soul.”

“What, then, shall be the final result of the Divine Government?”—and he answers:

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.”

Then, finally, Mr. Talmage summons the Saviour.

He asks: “O Christ! Is there a perdition?”—and Jesus answers:

“At the end of the world the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Here again Mr. Talmage is presuming upon the ignorance or the prepossessions of his hearers to give this quotation the effect he desires. For it is impossible that he should not know that the “end of the world” here spoken of is a very different thing from the “end of the world” toward which he is directing his hearers’ thoughts.

For this separation and judgment was to take place at the *beginning*, not at the end of Christ’s reign; at the end, not of the material universe, *kosmos*, but at the

end of that age, *Aeon*, *i. e.*, the Mosaic age, which was terminated by the establishment of Christianity.

Neither is the punishment here specified at all to Mr. Talmage's purpose. "Many shall come," says Jesus in another place, "from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the *children of the kingdom* shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mr. Talmage could by no means admit that the children of his future and final kingdom of heaven were to be cast into outer darkness to weep and gnash their teeth; and is therefore obliged to make this passage refer to temporal and immediately impending judgments. Whatever is intended, therefore, by the "furnace of fire," the "wailing and gnashing of teeth," it must have primary reference to earthly and temporal punishments. And aside from this, let the punishment be what and where it may, here or hereafter, the real question still recurs: Is it hopeless, endless, unbeneficial torture, continued for torture's sake, as long as God exists? Universalism holds that whatever God's punishments are, and wherever they are inflicted, and however bitter and long-continued they may be, their final result will be to subdue utterly the stubborn will, satisfy completely the demands of justice, produce a perfect and lasting repentance, a final and complete conformity to the will of God. No soul can forever resist them.

But Mr. Talmage proposes to introduce testimony more to the point. He selects these passages:

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,"—and

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

“Now,” says Mr. Talmage, “many Universalists say you are to go back to the Greek, and find out that that word ‘everlasting’ don’t mean what you have been representing it to mean.” “So,” he continues, “there are persons who could not parse a Greek sentence to save themselves from being hanged, who don’t know the difference between Kappa and Epsilon, who talk about Greek.”

Here, at last, Mr. Talmage unconsciously discloses his secret. When you hear a man disparage learning you may be sure that he has something to fear from it. The same motive and spirit that here seeks to throw contempt upon the application of learning to scripture interpretation is even now clamoring all over our country against Public Schools and other means of enlightenment.

Knowing that a very slight knowledge of the language in which the New Testament was written would be fatal to his theory, Mr. Talmage seeks to ridicule such knowledge. In speaking thus contemptuously of learning, he displays the true priestly sagacity. It is the immemorial policy of priestcraft to blind that it may control. Ignorance is the soil in which alone superstition can be cultivated. It was knowledge that killed the Giant Despair, whose ghost Mr. Talmage is trying to coax out of its grave. Unless he can inspire his hearers with a contempt for learning, his cause is lost. If he can not keep them in ignorance of the real significance of the passages he has quoted, he can not keep them in bondage to the fear of endless torments. Therefore he seeks refuge in a weak ridicule, and declines the contest

on the grounds of learning, saying "the English is good enough for you, and good enough for me."

I am persuaded that Mr. Talmage thoroughly understands the fact that the word "everlasting" which he here brings forward, did not and does not, on the lips of Christ, doom any soul to hopeless torment and endless ruin.

For it is not Universalists alone who have discovered that fact. Some of the most learned men of Mr. Talmage's own school of theology long ago found it out and announced it. The highest authority on the meaning of the phrase "everlasting punishment," outside of the New Testament, is the great Origen, who was born only 185 years after Christ, and who was the most learned and eminent of the early Fathers of the Church. Using the very language in which the New Testament was written, he must be held to be better authority on the question than the preacher of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, even although the latter "knows Kappa from Epsilon," and to save himself from being hanged, might be able to "parse a Greek sentence." Origen was a Universalist, believing that all punishment is disciplinary, medicinal, and corrective, and that every soul shall finally be purified and saved. Yet he uses the very phrase "everlasting punishment" to describe penalties which he taught would certainly come to an end, thus showing conclusively that the phrase had not in that age the meaning of endlessness which has been imported or injected into it by theologians of more recent times, to suit the exigencies of the non-scriptural theory of immortal torments. In other words, Origen, using the same language in which the words of Jesus are recorded, employs the

phrases "everlasting fire" and "everlasting punishment," to describe disciplinary and corrective punishments which, so far from being endless, should result in the complete purification of the sinful soul.

But Mr. Talmage finds it easier to ridicule the results of investigation than to confute them. His acquaintance with the plans and purposes of God is that of an intimate and familiar confidant, and so he takes a short and easy road out of difficulties. This is his original and conclusive disposition of the matter:

"I reply," says Mr. Talmage, "that God, if He found there was so vast a difference between the original and our translation, would long before this have given it to us in English, so that we who don't know Greek could understand it." "You can't make me believe," shouts the Tabernacle preacher, "that God would keep a truth in which our eternal destiny is involved covered up in a heap of Greek roots!"

Mr. Talmage's friends, already considerably exercised with anxiety about him, should redouble their vigilance after this declaration. The entire New Testament being written in Greek, the story of the birth, miracles, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, together with the entire body of his teaching, and that of the Apostles, being written in Greek—in short, the whole Christian revelation being involved in the structure and usage of the Greek language, or, as Mr. Talmage elegantly puts it, "covered up in a heap of Greek roots," it is evident that "you can't make him believe" that that revelation contains *anything* of grave importance. Nothing less than a new, direct, and express revelation, written in the language now used by the average Brooklyn churchgoer, will command Mr. Talmage's belief. To "save

himself from being hanged" he could parse a Greek sentence, but to save him from being damned you must "give it to him in English!"

Mr. Talmage might, however, have put the substance of his proposition in such form as to have commanded universal assent. If, instead of assuming that the doctrine of immortal pain is true, and therefore it *must* be revealed, must be found in the Scriptures whether it is there or not, and in spite of all uncertainties and obscurities of language, if he had said, "If the doctrine of unending torment is true, we shall find it clearly and unmistakably revealed in Scripture, for it is inconsistent with the character of a just God to profess to make a final, complete revelation to His creatures of their duty and destiny, and leave the most momentous fact of all in any doubt or obscurity;" if this had been his proposition it would have commanded the assent of all rational minds. For such minds have the feeling so well expressed by Athanase Coquerel, the distinguished Protestant clergyman of Paris, who says: "Who will believe that the eternity of punishment, a doctrine of such grave and terrible importance, can depend, in any sense, upon trifles of criticism, upon variations of translation? The first legitimate prejudice against such a dogma is created by the necessity of giving it such a support; and I can not but think that, if it was taught in the Gospel, it would be done with a clearness so terrible that we should all tremble at it, but not dispute it."

Now the doctrine of unending torment is not only not clearly and unmistakably taught in the Gospel, but its direct contrary is in many passages distinctly affirmed.

And not only so, but if it is inconsistent with the character of God to keep a revelation, in which our eternal destiny is involved "covered up in a heap of Greek roots," what is to be said about the countless millions to whom God never made this revelation in the Greek or any other language, who lived and died with no warning whatever of their awful peril? or of the millions now living who are beyond the utmost reach of this Christian revelation, and are marching down unwarned to their awful doom?

If the human race do now, or ever have stood in peril of hopeless, unbeneficial, endless torture at the hands of their Creator, they ought, at the very least, to have been clearly and distinctly warned. A *just* God, without either love, pity, or mercy, could have done no less than to warn His creatures of their peril. Has He done so? Why, even granting all Mr. Talmage claims about this revelation, God has not warned in any manner one-half, not one-fourth, not one-tenth of His creatures. The revelation of the Old Testament confined to a favored nation; the revelation of the New Testament reaching less than one-third of the people now living on this earth! Now add the fact that no reputable scholar will risk his reputation in the assertion that the Old Testament teaches the doctrine of endless torment, in other words, that it is practically conceded that God left even His favored people without warning for four thousand years; and add the other fact that the New Testament utterances on this point are such that the belief in the final salvation of all existed unchallenged among the purest and best in the earlier and purer ages of the Christian Church, and exists and is prevailing now

wherever enlightened minds and Christian hearts are the interpreters of the Gospel—put these facts together and the inference is irresistible : God has not revealed the doctrine of endless torments, simply because it is not true ; He has not warned His creatures of hopeless, irremediable ruin at the end of this short life, because they stand in no such peril at His hands. God has not conferred the unsought gift of life upon myriads of His creatures only to make that gift an infinite curse to them. He “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

But it suits Mr. Talmage’s purpose in this sermon to ignore utterly the results both of critical and rational inquiry into the meaning of our Saviour’s language.

In a controversy with Universalists he “don’t know Greek,” and speaks of such knowledge contemptuously ; but in a controversy with Roman Catholics he could, to use his own elegant and felicitous expression, “put the screws” of exegesis on those passages upon which the Romish Church relies to support the doctrines of Transubstantiation, Plenary Indulgence, and the rest.

In *such* a controversy he becomes “a Greek among Greeks,” but when Universalism is the object of his attack, he assumes the attitude of a simple-minded expounder of the letter of the English version of the Scriptures, saying “the English is good enough for me, and good enough for you.”

In this assumed character, he brings forward the well-known passage, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal ;” and, declining all investigation as to Christ’s actual meaning, disposes of the whole matter in this summary fashion :

“ If you dwindle up the sufferings of the lost, you must dwindle up the rejoicings of the saved ! If, in one case, the sufferings are not to be eternal, in the other the rejoicings are not to be eternal ! ”

Now, we have seen the Tabernacle preacher put to some desperate shifts already in the course of his sermon, but to none, I think, quite so desperate as this. For this Christian preacher here brings forward the old pagan doctrine of Dualism to the support of his assumed Christian doctrine of the endlessness of punishment. In those early and misty days, when this world was conceived to be the theatre (I beg Mr. Talmage’s pardon, he does not like theatres)—the arena, I will say, of the administration of two equally potent Rulers—one evil, the other good—between whom there was waged perpetual warfare without substantial advantage to either,—in those days, the ideas of a necessary relation and interdependence between Good and Evil, and an endless conflict prevailed among men. But when Monotheism arose, and the grand conception of One Supreme Being, God over all, dawned upon the world, then these dualistic notions faded away into the twilight from which Mr. Talmage in desperation invokes their aid. And when the Christian Revelation threw its broad light upon this One Supreme Being, and showed Him not only as God of all but as Father of all, willing not only but abundantly able to “ subdue all things unto Himself,” to triumph over all rebellion, not by eternalizing Evil, but by overcoming it ; able not only but directly purposing to ransom all souls from darkness and wickedness, and as an earnest of that purpose sending His Son to “ seek and to save that which was lost,”—*then* men’s souls began to

throw off the incubus of darkness and terror that had so long oppressed them, and they began to hope for and to expect the final perfect triumph of Good over Evil. Among the more eminent of the Christian Fathers who so received the Christian Revelation were CLEMENT, ORIGEN, MARCELLUS of Ancyra, TITUS of Bostra, GREGORY of Nyssa, DIDYMUS the blind, DIODORUS of Tarsus, THEODORE of Mopsuestia, FABIVS MARIUS VICTORINUS, and many others less known to modern times. These were all Universalists, believing that the Divine punishments, wherever inflicted or however long continued, were disciplinary, medicinal, corrective, and would result in the final purification of all souls. Yet they used this phrase "everlasting punishment," as descriptive of severe and long-continued correction; and it apparently never occurred to them that in teaching, suffering, toiling for the final abolition of all evil they were working also for the final abolition of all good. They thought that the Kingdom of Light should more and more prevail till the kingdom of darkness should be utterly abolished and terminated.

They had not heard Mr. Talmage declare that the existence of evil is necessary to the existence of good, that "if you dwindle up the sufferings of the lost, you must dwindle up the rejoicings of the saved! If the suffering is not to be eternal the rejoicing is not to be eternal!"

The plain English of this declaration (that English which Mr. Talmage declares is "good enough for him") is simply this, that nobody can be endlessly happy unless somebody is endlessly miserable, that the perpetuation of good depends upon the perpetuation of evil,

that when the fires of hell go out the glories of Heaven will fade into darkness. It follows, by consequence, that good has not an independent but only a relative existence. If there were no evil there could be no good ; no hell, no heaven ; no devil, no God ; no Universalism, no full-orbed Talmage ! In eternal darkness is our only expectation of light, in eternal conflict our only hope of peace, in endless suffering our only prospect of enduring joy !

I commend to the Pagan philosopher of the Brooklyn Tabernacle these words of the Christian Apostle :

“ Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. * * And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

Once more : Had Mr. Talmage been disposed to acquaint his hearers with the real force and significance of our Saviour's words, “ these shall go away into everlasting punishment,” he would have said,—for I can not credit him with the ignorance he feigns—he would have said : “ This phrase can not be relied upon to establish the endlessness of the Divine punishments, because the word ‘ everlasting ’ derives its force from its object, and is commonly applied in Scripture to objects having a definite and limited duration. Moreover, the word ‘ punishment ’ has as its primary meaning *pruning* or *trimming*, as of the limbs of a tree, signifying in fact, disciplinary

or corrective suffering, instead of vindictive torture. Besides, the phrase 'everlasting punishment' is not, in this sentence, balanced against *immortal* life or endless existence, but against 'eternal life,' which is a very different thing, signifying not primarily the *duration* of existence, but the *quality* of life. Both the righteous and the wicked have immortality, but the righteous only have 'eternal life.'"

Thus far Mr. Talmage, as an honest and competent interpreter of the Christian Scriptures, should have instructed his hearers. But since he has chosen to compel this passage to the support of the horrible dogma of endless, infinite, vindictive torments, straining the words beyond the intent of their author, beyond the usage of the New Testament writers and the Christian Fathers, and apparently relying upon the commended ignorance or the prepossessions of his hearers to give the effect he desires, I will refer the whole matter to the highest and final authority, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I will ask him, "What is eternal life?"—and he answers :

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

"Then," I continue, "since eternal life is life spiritual, the blessed knowledge of God and Christ, does it belong alone to the future and immortal state, or may it be had here and now?"—he answers :

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed* from death unto life."

I ask him, "Lord, what is the condemnation?"—he answers :

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved."

I ask, "Lord, have you come to deliver men from this condemnation?"—he answers :

"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."—Again :

"I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—Again :

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

I ask, "How many, Lord, shall be saved?"—he answers :

"All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me."

I ask, "How many, Lord, hath the Father given you?"—he answers :

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands."

"Then, blessed Saviour, will you indeed save all?"—and Christ answers :

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

And Paul speaks :

“He gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

And John confirms :

“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.”

And Paul adds :

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

And the Lord rejoins :

“There shall be one Fold and one Shepherd.”

Then One speaks whose voice it did not suit Mr. Talmage to hear. The Almighty proclaims :

“I am the Lord, and there is none else ; I form the light and create darkness ; I make peace and create evil ; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

“I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth ; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

“My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.

“Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.”

Christian brethren, the Bible, read not to give isolated passages in support of an arbitrary dogma, but studied to ascertain the real meaning and intent of its authors, gives no support to the doctrine of the endlessness of the

Divine punishments, the final triumph of evil, the infinite ruin of the race. But it does teach in every book, on almost every page, in every variety of expression, by its threatenings no less than by its promises, the doctrine that God is the Absolute Monarch of His universe, who can and will overcome all evil, whether of imperfection or of sinfulness, who will, either by the process of faith and obedience, or by the process of overwhelming corrective retribution, subdue utterly all rebellious wills, bring every refractory soul to repentance, and educate every one of His creatures to final, willing, absolute, blessed conformity to His perfect law of righteousness. And this is Universalism.

Mr. Talmage, in closing what he calls his Scripture argument, makes this appeal :

“ Oh, my friends, will you throw over your Bible or Universalism ? I press you up to that choice to-day, and you must make it.”

I reply :

“ Throw over your Universalism, and you *do* throw over your Bible.”

The real question is, Will you interpret your Bible aright ?

Universalism does not make men abandon their Bibles ; but the belief that the Bible teaches the horrid dogma of infinite ruin and despair *has* caused thousands to throw over their Bibles, to give up their faith in God, to renounce their belief in religion, to desert its ordinances, discard its teachings and avoid its teachers.

I warn you, therefore, that by the lurid light of the dogma of endless torments, you can not interpret your Bible truly ; that with the smoke of an endless hell roll-

ing between you and your Creator you can not know Him truly, for you can not see Him as He is !

Mr. Talmage concludes this division of his subject thus :

“Now I don’t at this moment say that this is the word of God. I don’t say it is an inspired book. I don’t even say it is a virtuous book, but I do say that if the Bible is right, then Universalism is wrong, awfully wrong, everlastingly wrong.”

What Mr. Talmage postpones saying, I will say now. I *will* say that this is the word of God. I will say that it is an inspired book. I do say that it is a virtuous book, the basis of the highest morality known to mankind. I will not say “if the Bible is right,” I concede no *ifs*. I say the Bible is right, and being right, the dogma of endless punishment is radically, hopelessly, curelessly wrong, a horrible imputation upon the Divine nature, an unauthorized and unwarrantable limitation of the power, justice, wisdom, and goodness of God, a derogation of the saving power of Christ and the potency of the Holy Spirit !

Through many ages this false, misleading, pernicious dogma has been an engine of spiritual despotism. Now its power is broken. It is a palsied and withering arm of priestcraft. Let not Mr. Talmage hope to restore it while the people hold the Bible, and the word of God is free.

II.—IS UNIVERSALISM REASONABLE ?

Mr. Talmage next says, “I proceed still further to show you that Universalism is unreasonable.”

This he proposes to demonstrate “geometrically” after the following fashion :

“There are two roads for the soul’s travel : one is faith in Christ, with all that it involves ; the other

starts with the rejection of Christ, and keeps on in sin and rebellion against God all the way through." "There are two roads leading out of New York ; one runs to Boston, the other to San Francisco." "Does it make no difference ?" asks Mr. Talmage, "which one of these roads a man takes ?" "These roads being in opposite directions, they must come out at opposite termini. Nothing but moral insanity can make you think any differently."

And this Mr. Talmage calls a "geometrical demonstration" of the unreasonableness of Universalism. He could scarcely have pitched upon an illustration more unfortunate for his purposes. If, indeed, the earth were a flat surface, such as, at the time when Mr. Talmage's mediæval theological system was framed, it was conceived to be, then his two roads running in opposite directions would have different termini ; but the "geometry," or rather the geodesy, of this earth happens to be such that two travelers, setting out in exactly opposite directions, and continuing their journey, must inevitably meet again. Undoubtedly the best way to get from New York to Boston is to take the direct Boston road, but that a man can go from New York to Boston, by way of San Francisco and the antipodes, is not to be doubted, unless, indeed, on arriving at San Francisco, which, in Mr. Talmage's figure seems to stand for "hell," he should be seized with "moral insanity" and decline to pursue the journey !

Universalism holds that "hell" is preventive against *such* moral insanity ! Salvation is final, complete, glad conformity to God's will, righteousness ; and can be pursued by the road of grace, faith leading to obedience, or by the road of retribution, punishment leading to

obedience ; and man can choose which of these roads he will take, but as to the final result he has no choice, and there is no alternative possibility. He must obey. God will not compromise with disobedience for pain. From the eternal demand for righteousness, man can take no final refuge in hell nor in that "moral insanity," misnamed moral freedom, which, in theological usage, means that God can make His grace irresistible to some, but not to all. Man is no more free to continue in endless rebellion than he is free to annihilate himself. He can not surrender his immortality. He must live, and he must conform at last, fully, willingly, gladly, to the Divine will, rising as fast as he does so conform from mere natural immortality into that eternal life, which is the knowledge of God, and the harmony of the human with the Divine will, through Jesus Christ. This, Mr. Talmage, is the Divine "geometry" of eternity, represented not by a line, but by a circle, and demonstrating, not the eternal discordance of God's universe, but a final perfect harmony and completeness.

Given, an Almighty Being, having the power and the disposition to perfect the humanity which He has created, and having all eternity to work in, and the Universalist expectation of His complete success is the only ground tenable by reason.

Misled by his figure of the two roads, Mr. Talmage asks, "Does it make no difference which road a man takes?"

Universalism answers, it makes a most momentous difference; the man who willfully rejects the offer of faith to lead him to obedience and life, subjects himself to the long and costly cure of punishment. As much better as

joy is than sorrow, hope than despair, love than hate, right than wrong, good than evil, so much better is it for man to follow the right road.

It is Mr. Talmage who minimizes the difference between the two roads. He teaches the doctrine that a man may travel the wrong road for fifty, sixty, three-score years, and then, by a miracle of conversion, be snatched back to the very goal toward which the man who has chosen the right road is faithfully directing his obedient steps!

It is this doctrine that confounds "the difference" between the two roads, that sends the murderer to heaven and his victim to hell, and makes the eternal destiny of a man to depend, not upon his character, but upon the often involuntary circumstances attendant upon his exit from this world. Not "did he live right?" but "did he die right?" is the question that decides his endless destiny! Instantly killed—hell! mortally wounded, but with breath to spare for a muttered repentance—heaven

It is this dogma that confuses moral distinctions, confounds our ideas of the Divine justice, divorces piety from integrity, religion from righteousness, and causes thousands to postpone their spiritual education from youth to age, under that delusion of "moral insanity" which teaches that a sensual life, followed by an effectual repentance, is "making the best of both worlds."

It is curious to observe, in the illustrations chosen by Mr. Talmage, the intellectual limitations imposed upon him by his bondage to an outgrown and outworn theological system. Both his "geometry" and his geography bear even date with his theology. Augustine may be called the father of the theology which Mr.

Talmage preaches, yet, as has been well observed, "ships are daily chartered to those antipodes which Augustine declared to be unscriptural, and Lactantius impossible, and Boniface of Metz beyond the latitude of salvation." The theological system of these men is conformed to, and in many features wholly depends upon, their views of the physical universe. Those views have been utterly discredited by advancing knowledge. The "times of the Almighty" are longer than they realized, and the scene of the Divine agency is grander, larger, older, and more teeming with life than they thought. Yet to-day the Brooklyn Tabernacle resounds, not with their moral ideas, but with their theological systems, and the preacher, seeking an illustration of things eternal, limits his view of the physical world to that portion of it that lies between Boston and San Francisco, serenely oblivious of the fact that the force of his illustration wholly depends upon there being no space beyond those "termini," and limiting, by the same mental law, his view of the moral progress possible to man to that narrow portion of an endless duration that lies between the cradle and the grave!

But theologians of Mr. Talmage's class learn nothing and forget nothing. With every advance of investigation the universe broadens and deepens before our wondering eyes. The standard by which we measure space and time enlarges day by day. Our minds are broadened by these helps to a larger and deeper realization of what an immortal existence, an infinite duration, must be; yet Mr. Talmage still fulminates dogmas that involve in their very structure conceptions of the phenomenal universe which were long ago discredited and

abandoned—still insists, with a theologic rage inversely proportioned to the tenuity of his evidence, that man's destiny for weal or woe is determinately and unalterably fixed in its briefest opening stage. This short life once past, no matter how short, no matter under what disabling circumstances spent, then there opens a changeless eternity! The crudest, weakest, most ignorant, most passionate, shortest portion of man's career, decides all the rest. All the work of eternity done in the first hour! Then ceases the love of God, the work of Christ, the saving power of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever! Then begins an endless carnival of wrath and hate, Almighty Power upholding the soul in immortal being to inflict on it immortal agony, with no purpose either to cleanse or to destroy, but only to increasingly and endlessly torment.

This is to ascribe to the Master-spirit of the universe a dark, infinite, motiveless malignity. Only "moral insanity" can accept such a theory; and, indeed, it is generally found necessary to produce a temporary moral insanity by the prolonged excitements and terrors of a "revival," before the doctrine can be lodged in any human mind.

Thus Mr. Talmage's reference to Justice is to a caricature of justice; his characterization of a God makes us wonder what terms are left in which to describe a devil; and in his appeal to Reason, as against Universalism, reason is utterly confounded.

"You ask me to believe that Universalism, which predicts salvation for all mankind, is reasonable, and I refuse to do it," shouts Mr. Talmage.

In reply, I say, "You ask me to believe that when

the sinner dies, God seizes on him, and makes the evil that is in him immortal, perpetuates and upholds it by His almighty power forever—and I refuse to believe it.”

Mr. Talmage holds that God will eternalize evil—Universalism holds that He will overcome and eradicate it utterly from His universe. Which is the more reasonable ?

Mr. Talmage goes on to say—and here I ask you to observe closely—Mr. Talmage goes on to say, “ You try to make me believe that in that world where all the desperadoes and abandoned have gone, the soul is going to get better. Will Robespierre and James Fisk be there ? Oh, what a delicious, savory place heaven would be if the wretches who went down to their graves unwashed got there ! ”

Is this the voice of a Christian minister, speaking of his fellow-creatures and fellow-sinners, for whom Jesus Christ died ? Is this the voice of a disciple of Him who came “ to seek and to save the lost ; ” who came “ not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved ; ” who “ tasted death for every man ; ” who took his way in the streets of Jerusalem, past the houses of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, down to the abodes of the weak, the abandoned, the degraded, the sinful, the tempted, the “ unwashed wretches ” of this Christian minister’s contemptuous vocabulary ? Is this man the mouth-piece of that God who taught us to say “ our Father ? ” who so “ loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son ? ” Is this the spirit of a disciple of that Lord, who spoke the parable of the lost sheep, and of the prodigal son ; who declared that

“there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance ;” who said, “Other sheep have I which are not of this fold ; them also must I bring ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” ?

It is time that this clattering, shallow tongue should be stopped.

It is to men of such spirit and temper that Jesus said, “The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.” It is to this auctioneer of reserved seats in the kingdom of God, who guarantees their first-class location, and their entire isolation from the unsavory and unwashed—it is to such stock-jobbers of heavenly places, that the parable was spoken, “Two men went up into the temple to pray : the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican ; I fast twice in the week ; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” And Christ says that he went down justified rather than the other. I tell you it is against a spirit such as this, that thus sneers, from the Christian pulpit, at God’s creatures, or any portion of them, as unsavory, unwashed wretches ; it is against a spirit such as this that Christ leveled his rebuke : “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”

It is a wonder to me that the Tabernacle preacher, so easily disgusted at things unsavory, does not at once move out of Brooklyn.

Yet it seems to me that if Almighty God could endure the lives of Robespierre and James Fisk so long, it ought to be somehow possible for Mr. Talmage to endure the thought of them a little longer, or at all events to withhold his sneer till he is sure of seeing an answering expression on the Saviour's face! And I believe that there is a speedier prospect for the repentance of a frank villain like Fisk, who knew he was a sinner, than there is for that of the man who uses his name—now that he is dead—to point the moral and adorn the tale of endless damnation.

Mr. Talmage ascends the judgment-seat of Christ too soon.

And I want you to look into this matter closely: According to Mr. Talmage's doctrine, James Fisk is now, and will forever remain in hell; a hell in which he can not repent, in which he can make no restitution to the persons whom he has wronged, or to the divine law he has offended against. Those whom he has wronged and injured on earth can get no satisfaction except in the contemplation of his eternal torture—a satisfaction which they can only enjoy by discharging from their hearts every spark of human and Christian feeling, and becoming devils incarnate, in their rancorous relish for revenge. They can never experience the divine delight of forgiving a repentant enemy. They can never obey the divine injunction, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." They can never rise to the sublime height of soul, exemplified by their

Master when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They can only perpetuate in heaven the hatreds of earth, gloat over the thought and sight of the tortures of their enemy, and then address themselves to the enjoyment of the holiness, purity, and charity of heaven with what appetite they may.

Mr. Talmage asks if "James Fisk will meet in the other world the widows and orphans, whose property he swamped in the 'Black Friday' panic?"

Is Mr. Talmage, then, sure that his side will be there? Is it a part of his creed, that to have property swamped in a Wall Street panic is a certain passport to Paradise? There will be rejoicing, in and out of the Stock Exchange, when this new decree of salvation is proclaimed!

But will Fisk and those whom he has injured ever meet? Universalism says, Yes! face to face, in the presence of Infinite Justice, in whose hands human wrongs are not perpetuated and immortalized, but are *righted*.

But I beg Mr. Talmage to observe that Fisk was not the only actor in that "Black Friday" drama—some of the players are living yet: some of them, for aught I know, are members of Mr. Talmage's Church; or may yet be converted by him to his peculiar views of heavenly joys. Then what? Why, then, when they die, they will enter the magnified Wall Street of his heaven; they will join his congregation of prosperous saints, and gathering around their pastor in that paradise, and looking down into hell, they will exult in the thought, that at last they have got a final corner on James Fisk!

Is that the temper of the heavenly host? Is that the spirit that will animate God's elect and God's redeemed?

Mr. Talmage exclaims, "What a delicious and savory place heaven would be if the wretches who went down to their graves unwashed, get there!" Now, if the contemptuous pharisaic spirit that dictated this expression toward souls, sinful and degraded, but God's creatures still—if this be heavenly-mindedness, if this be the spirit that animates redeemed souls, then this New Testament is a mistake—then the life and teachings of Christ are wholly false; then "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," is not a reflection of the spirit of God, is not the temper of the heavenly mansions.

Universalists believe, and have no hesitation in saying that they believe, that James Fisk is, or will be saved. Not saved in the sense in which Mr. Talmage uses that word—in the sense, namely, of being made safe, being secure from punishment; but saved in the New Testament sense; saved by the eradication, through the operation of the divine laws, of all the evil dispositions that were in him. As for the rest—as for the extent of his penalties, the measure and duration of his sufferings, we believe that as he sowed so shall he reap. Of the terrible severity of the retributive laws we have hints and foretokens in the operation of these laws as visible in this life, just as we have evidence of the power and potency of the divine mercy, as exhibited in the operation of the law of forgiveness. The more stubborn the ore, the fiercer the fire that separates it from its dross. The more rebellious the soul, the more imperative and commanding the divine forces that subdue its refractoriness. But there is no question as to the

final result. God will subdue all things unto Himself. He will no more suffer that rebellious soul to continue in eternal disobedience than He will suffer Himself to be cast from the throne of the universe. Still less will He, as Mr. Talmage's theory requires, take means to make that rebellion endless, in order that the pain may be made endless. Almighty God will not accept pain as a compromise for disobedience, but He will use pain as the instrument to perfect obedience. He will have His law honored, and His law can not be honored by eternal rebellion, even in eternal pain. It can only be honored by obedience—ample, full, and free. "By myself have I sworn, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting,"—not destroying—"the soul." God offers His creatures no alternative. They must conform at last to his most righteous law—a law which is not a mere arbitrary decree, but is founded on that eternal nature of things which couples well-being with well-doing. He has so made man, that there is no peace, no power, no happiness possible to him, except in conformity to that law. He will have you clean. If you are tractable, teachable, and obedient, He will perfect you by gentle ministries, by disciplines of grace. If you are untractable, violent, rebellious, He will burn you clean, and both the grace and the fire are equally expressions of His relentless purpose to have you right—a purpose born not of wrath, but inspired by His divine good-will toward the creatures He has made.

Mr. Talmage is troubled about bad men in heaven. His whole conception of the future is artificial, mechanical, unauthorized, and unwarrantable. He does not know what and where heaven and hell, as places, are—whether they exist at all as separate places ; whether the separation of good and bad souls be a physical separation in space, or a moral and spiritual separation, as it is here ; whether it be a separation of persons or a separation of qualities, as it is here, where good and bad reside in the same person. Even James Fisk had good qualities. Even Mr. Talmage may possibly have bad ones, and the discriminating justice of Almighty God will not ignore the one nor the other, by placing the one, with all his faults, immediately at death, in the highest heaven, or by putting the other, with all his virtues, and latent tendencies toward goodness, in the lowest hell forever. You want to understand that this notion of the final two-fold allotment of humanity at death, is a dogma utterly unauthorized and unwarrantable. No one can tell where the place of heaven is, any more than he can tell where the place of hell is. The Bible is silent about places. But Christ says, “Neither shall men go seeking and saying, ‘Lo! here, and lo! there,’ for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” The heaven that the Bible speaks of, that Christ teaches, is the heaven within. And so, while we do not know *where* heaven and hell are as places, we do know *what* heaven and hell are, as states of soul. We know that they exist here, and that they exist together, and that they react upon each other. Nay, they exist in the same soul, lighting it at one time with all the charities of heaven, and devastating it at another time with all the passions of hell. Most of

us know something by experience of both the heavenly and hellish states of temper and spirit. We know that the struggle of our life is to subdue the evil, and exalt and strengthen the good; the peril and danger of our lives is that the evil desires shall get the upper hand. In other words, our struggle is not to get somewhere, but to become something. We know that never, under any circumstances, in any place, in the most gorgeous of heavens, could we be happy or at peace if we carried thither the devilish disposition. This, then—this danger of being overcome of evil—is the real peril of existence; the peril which God sent Christ to help us through; and which He foresaw when He created us; and against which He has provided potent and adequate resources, not confined in their operation to this narrow space of mortal life, this opening stage of an eternal duration, but extending over the whole space and realm of His moral government. And this is what David saw, and felt and meant, when he said, “Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.”

This sense of the awful presence and universal dominion of God’s moral government is terrible and overwhelming to the soul while it loves sin, but is most animating and inspiring to that soul when it learns to hate sin and love righteousness. So long as the desire for selfish, sinful enjoyment survives in man, so long will he be content to have the penalties of his transgressions

visited upon others. God may violate the fundamental principle of justice, and punish the innocent for the guilty, so long as *he* escapes. This is his degradation. But when he awakens to the real nature of sin, and sees its inherent vileness, while he feels its mastery, then he covets the corrective penalties that will free him from its thralldom. He wants to be well, clean, whole. He wants not his wrong condoned, but righted. His better nature is aroused, his conscience quickened, and the highest heaven would be a hell to his awakened nobleness, so long as others were enduring the penalties of his misdeeds.

Contrast this picture with that of Mr. Talmage's selfish saints, who have carried the principles of Wall street bodily into the New Jerusalem, who have accepted a mere safety, which is no salvation, at the price of innocence suffering for their guilt, and who clamor in self-righteous disgust to have all "unwashed wretches" kept out of their reservation!

Mr. Talmage, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord." "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet!" They only are the disciples of Christ who have the Christ-spirit, and that spirit is not for earth and time alone, but for heaven and eternity; it is "eternal life."

But life is not *all* peril, nor is the sense of danger the only or the chief motive of our endeavors and struggles here. We are sinful beings, but we are also capable of righteousness—that wisdom "whose ways are pleasantness, and whose paths are peace." And not all our infirmities are sins, but many grow out of our undevelop-

ment, our rudimentary, formative, imperfect condition—a condition imposed upon us by our Creator. So that not all the trials and difficulties of life, not all its pains and sorrows are penal and retributive, but many are developing and educational. Christ was a sinless being, but he suffered, and was “perfected through suffering.”

Mr. Talmage brings forward Nero, Robespierre, and James Fisk, as types of a class that God, who made them, will find it very difficult to deal with, and with which Universalism, as Mr. Talmage understands it, can do nothing. But, I ask you to suppose that while James Fisk was lying wounded at the Grand Central Hotel, he had sent for Mr. Talmage, confessed his sin, expressed his contrition, professed faith in Christ. Mr. Talmage would have given him the Divine assurances of forgiveness, soothed his last moments with promises of heaven. Then Mr. Talmage would have gone to his Tabernacle, and proclaimed this conversion as a signal instance of the Divine grace. *Te Deums* would have been sung to the saving power and glory of God, which had overcome that rebellious soul, and melted that stubborn heart. But now he is gone, and he did not so go. He was stupefied with opium and died unconscious. He is out of the reach of Talmage, who seems to think that so long as a sinner is on this side of the line, where Talmage can get at him, there is some hope for him, but when he has gone where there is nobody but God to deal with him, he is lost utterly and forever !

Now, the Universalist church ventures to affirm, on both scriptural and rational warrant, that God will save that man yet. Not by a miracle of grace, not upon a

confession of faith, muttered in the delirium or weakness of physical dissolution, but by the steady operation upon that spirit of the retributive and saving forces that have begun to show their power even here. That even his blinded eyes will be opened to see his sin, that his dormant conscience will be roused to feel remorse. That he will be humbled and subdued utterly to the Divine will, that his crimes will assume their due enormity in his sight, that he will feel that true repentance whose only genuine sign is an intense and resistless desire to make reparation for the wrong done, and to seek pardon of the persons wronged. I ask you, then, if this will be a less signal instance of God's power and grace than it would have been if it had taken place three years ago? Will it be less a manifestation of God's power and justice thus to save the creature He made, than it would be to thrust him into a hopeless, unbeneficial, unending pain forever? I ask you, further, will the one whom Fisk has injured most bitterly and deeply on earth, insist in heaven that his enemy shall never be redeemed? Will the true inhabitants of heaven, those who have gone there because of their heavenly spirit, who know and feel the love of God and the grace of Christ—will they besiege the throne of grace to have that repentant, humbled, suffering soul kept out forever? I tell you, no! The spirits who inhabit heaven, are *heavenly* spirits; and the chief delight of heavenly spirits is to do as Christ did, "seek and save the lost." The wicked man's wicked work shall be burnt; he shall suffer loss, "but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

I ask you to observe the perfect justice of this summation. "The Judge of all the earth will do right."

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” What he sows : no less, no more. Justice is vindicated and established when the wrong is made right, not when one evil is sought to be cured by a greater.

A thousand human beings are born every year in this great city, into conditions of poverty, degradation, inheritance, so fatal to all good, so pregnant with all evil, that the greatest wonder, the standing miracle, is that they don't grow up even worse than they are. Now, according to Mr. Talmage's theory, God takes these unsavory wretches, these depraved, bereaved, and friendless souls, whose whole earthly career is a hell, a wild-eyed race of sin, want, and wretchedness, from the cradle to the grave—God snatches them from this hell and plunges them into a deeper and more piteous hell, an endless carnival of ruin, perpetuated and eternalized by the very Being who created them !

“Our Father which art in heaven; HALLOWED BE THY NAME;” forgive the blasphemy which thus ascribes to thy Divine nature the attributes and temper of an infinite devilhood !

If you want to know what blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is, this it is :—a sin the most ineradicable and persistent of all the sins possible to man, because bigotry, selfishness, ignorance, and hatred are its allies and its prompters.

Divine justice is done, Christian friends, when the wrong is made right. Human justice does as it can with imperfect knowledge and inadequate instruments. It hangs the murderer, but it can not restore the murdered, nor make whole the broken circle of relations, duties, and rights. But Divine justice is not thus hampered. Infi-

nite power, everlasting time, are its prerogatives. It can punish the murderer, restore the murdered, right the wrong, and cause "the wrath of man to praise God." Human law can not heal its own breaches ; it can only inadequately punish the transgressor. Divine law can both punish and restore. A law is honored by obedience, not by eternal rebellion, in eternal pain. Divine justice can vindicate itself by bringing its rebels back, not merely to torment, but to obedience ; not to mechanical, physical, brute-force obedience, but to moral obedience—a willing, glad conformity to a Divine order, perceived to be absolutely the highest and the best.

Thus, Universalism denies the endless perpetuation of evil. Sin, wrong, and suffering shall have an end. The discords of this life shall not be augmented in the next, nor increase and endure throughout eternity. Justice and righteousness shall prevail.

Universalism is accordant with the highest reason, because it affirms harmony and completeness as the final result of the Divine Government.

III.—THE ABETTOR OF BAD MORALS.

Mr. Talmage next proceeds to assert that "Universalism is the abettor of bad morals." Having attacked the opinions and convictions of Universalists with results not quite to his satisfaction, he will now attack their moral character. And that he feels himself now coming on to difficult and dangerous ground is evident from his method of attack. Mr. Talmage may be an honorable man in private life, but this public utterance would be appealed to in vain to prove it. To sustain the grave charge which he has brought, there were two honorable

methods open to him,—both of which he has rejected. It was competent for him to attempt to show that the principles of Universalism are such as logically lead to immorality. Universalism is the belief that “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap :”—that “though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished ;”—that “he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done ; and there is no respect of persons.” It was competent for him to attempt to show that this belief tends to wickedness,—that a belief in the strict and inexorable operation of the Law of Retribution diminishes moral restraint,—that the belief in a God of anger, passion and caprice, whose favor and indulgence can be won, as in an oriental despot, by the intercession of a favorite,—a God as capricious in forgiving as in punishing ;—it was competent for him to attempt proof that belief in such a God is a better educator of conscience than the belief in a God of perfect Justice and Holiness who has established an eternal moral order for the government of mankind.

Or, disliking to attempt this, it would have been legitimate for Mr. Talmage to have made the attempt to produce unquestioned instances of men who have been made bad by their Universalism ; or instances in which the Universalist church had condoned offenses against good morals ; or to put his finger on the place where Universalist teachers had encouraged men to vicious practices. It would avail him nothing to point out instances of very decided imperfection on the part of Universalists ;—on such a field there would be blows to take as well as blows to give ;—what he had to show, to sustain his serious charge, was authentic instances of bad morals that were

the direct fruit of Universalist doctrines. This, the only other honorable course open to him, he has also declined; and, aware of his pulpit license to make statements which elsewhere made would subject him to stringent corrective penalties, he has used that license to the utmost; as witness what follows:

He charges against Universalism that it is "the High Priest of Suicide!"

What does he bring to sustain that charge? conveniently ambiguous like all his others, and intended to convey an imputation which he does not like to definitely express.

We should expect, at least, an array of facts and figures, showing that the direct result of Universalism was to produce suicide, and that, as a matter of fact, Universalists were committing *hari-kari* to such an extent as to relieve Mr. Talmage of his very evident fear of the increase of Universalism!

Instead of this, what have we? Why we have a story about a man near Utica, who went into the presence of a Universalist minister with a loaded pistol (like another Mutual Friend) and upon receiving an assurance, in response to his question, that he would go straight to heaven at death, put the pistol to his temple with intent to take his own life, which act the minister prevented by shouting "hell" at him!

This is the proof, and all the proof, that Mr. Talmage offers in support of his charge that "Universalism is the High Priest of Suicide!"

There are some reasons why I am sorry that the story is not true. It has so long been a part of the stock-in-trade of the professional revivalist, always brought in at that part of his programme which says, "Here attack

Universalism,"—it has been so often on the lips of such saintly Christians as Burchard and Knapp, that it seems a pity to have it turn out that men of such scrupulous exactitude should have been giving currency to a myth! Such, however, is the melancholy fact. The scene of the alleged incident has been thoroughly investigated, the story found to be without foundation, and public retraction of it has been several times compelled. I am sorry that its falsity prevents me from expressing the respect which I should certainly feel for a minister who could retain his gravity and self-possession under such trying circumstances, and scare a fool from his folly by so simple an expedient!

Having given Mr. Talmage's "evidence" more attention than it deserves, I desire now to speak to the matter itself.

Universalism is the "High Priest of Suicide" says Mr. Talmage. Now, if Universalism were what Mr. Talmage falsely calls it ;—if it were the belief that, whenever and however we die, we go direct to one and the same heaven, irrespective of our conduct and character in this life ;—if Universalism answered in any respect to these malicious libels upon it, it would still not be provocative of suicide. No doctrine will of itself, unassisted by physical or mental disease, overcome the deep-seated, primal instinct of self preservation. The suicidal mania is a mental disease, induced generally by disappointment, remorse, shame, fear, revenge, and the like. From the first recorded suicide in Bible history,—that of Samson, whose motive was revenge,—down to the recent self destruction of the clergyman in Washington—(a believer of Mr. Talmage's own kind, by the way)—whose motive was shame, the malign and depressing passions have,

with few exceptions, been the exciting cause. Religious excitement, so called, has driven its thousands to suicide. It has not, however, been an excitement produced by the doctrines of Universalism, but a frenzy directly resulting from that gospel of eternal Ruin and Despair, of which Mr. Talmage is a chief apostle. No man ever lifted his hand against his own life while his heart was full of the divine assurance of final victory over all evil and disaster, which Universalism, of all doctrines, alone can give.

“Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad.” I can imagine no other explanation of the folly which induced the Tabernacle preacher to bring against Universalism a charge which recoils with such fatal effect upon his own doctrines. For the sad and lengthening record of self-destruction has no sadder page than that which attests the suicides produced by the creed and dogma of despair. Let the explanation be what it may, the fact is indisputable, that when a man is convinced that his unescapable doom is an endless hell, he has rather a tendency to rush headlong upon his awful fate by suicide than to attempt to evade it by prolonging his life. Convince a soul that it has committed the unpardonable sin, and you bring on the suicidal mania, ending inevitably with self-destruction.

Out of many sad and awful instances of this, one which occurred almost under my own eyes, has left an ineffaceable record on my heart.

The victim was a lady well known to me, about fifty years of age, who had been from her girlhood a devout, a consecrated, a most conscientious Christian woman. She had lived in the fear of God and in good will to men, as she understood it; in membership of one of the ortho-

dox churches—I will not call its name—but it was one of the strictest sects.

A revival broke out in the village where she and I lived, and she was drawn into the vortex of it. And as the gloom produced by the Revivalist's pictures of endless, vindictive torments deepened on her mind, the awful thought stole in at last that she had committed the "unpardonable sin." And she brooded upon it, and it never relaxed its hold upon her, but only deepened and intensified, until a "horror of great darkness" settled upon her soul; and on one of the sweetest May mornings that ever dawned on this world, she arose at an early hour, from the side of her sleeping husband, procured his razor, went into the cellar of her house, and there took her own life. But a few hours after the deed I was there; and the impression produced upon me by that sight will never, never be effaced. As I stood and looked, I asked: Poor, misguided, hunted, desperate soul, were you driven to this by the Gospel,—by "the truth as it is in Jesus?" and that dim, silent room seemed full of voices answering: "No, no, no! This is the result of weak, cruel, blinded *man's* teaching,—not God's truth."

Many thousands of even sadder cases than this are on record, Mr. Talmage, produced, not by Universalism, but by what you vainly call the Gospel,—Christ's "Glad Tidings."

Why, let us try the ring of a few sentences of the gospel of Christ and compare them with the gospel according to Talmage:

"Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people;"—proclaims the angel, announcing the advent of the Saviour.

—"Not to all, not to all!" shouts the Tabernacle preacher,—“good tidings to the few,—awful tidings of infinite sorrow to the many.”

“Through the tender mercy of our God whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them which sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,” says the gospel according to Christ.

—"News from below of inextinguishable wrath and endless damnation," responds Talmage.

"The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost," says Jesus Christ.

—"I stand here to proclaim the hopeless irrecoverable condition and eternal suffering of the lost," thunders the Brooklyn gossamer.

"I say unto you that joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance," says the Lord Christ.

—"What a delicious, savory place heaven will be if all the unwashed souls that die go there," sneers Mr. Talmage.

"I will draw all men unto me," says Christ.

—"Countless millions shall be rejected and cast off forever," affirms the preacher of Brooklyn the Tabernacle.

Christian men and women, which is the gospel? Which doctrine would a wise physician prescribe as a preventive to the suicidal mania?

I ask you which doctrine is the "high priest of suicide?" Universalism assures a man deliberately contemplating suicide (these are, however, exceptional cases; men don't reason themselves into suicide).—Universalism assures the man deliberately contemplating suicide that he will

change nothing for the better by that act. That he can not kill his soul ; that he will think, feel, and remember even more keenly and vividly after the act than before it ; that he goes not away from scrutiny but toward scrutiny ; that he can hide nothing, conceal nothing, and that, therefore, the wisest act of which a fallen human being is capable is to bravely face his disaster, shames, contempts, and distresses, which thus met will form steps by which, through the grace of God, he shall climb out of the lowest depths into the light of final victory.

I can not enter, either in feeling or thought, into the inconceivable levity with which Mr. Talmage in his sermon has treated this saddest of all human phenomena. According to the reporters' notes, his audience were "amused" when he warned any who were contemplating suicide "not to leave a note for their friends, saying, Meet me in heaven."

"You won't go *there*," says Mr. Talmage.

Then there was "amusement," in the audience. Why ? What matter for laughter had been started ? Nothing but this ; the endless, hopeless, irrecoverable damnation of a human soul had been jocularly announced by this minister of religion. What is one more soul added to the millions already burning in this endless hell ? Nothing—nothing, of course. But I think there must have been some in that audience, who having lost a son, brother, father, husband, wife, daughter, sister, or near friend by suicide, did not quite feel like joining in the amusement created by this flippant announcement of an unspeakably awful doom ! I suppose I could bring no more forcible illustration of heartlessness which this

dogma often begets, or of the utter lack of real belief in it, than is thus shown when the preacher jokes and the audience laugh in the course of its presentation. Richard Baxter's audiences did not laugh. George Whitfield's congregations were not "amused." Jonathan Edwards' hearers groaned and shrieked when this dogma was presented to them with an earnestness and power which attested at least the honesty of the preacher, and which almost made the doctrine respectable, in spite of its utter groundlessness. There is joy among the angels in heaven when one sinner repents. There is laughter in the Brooklyn Tabernacle when the endless ruin of a sinful soul is announced!

In the Brooklyn *Eagle* of Tuesday last I observed a review of a new book by Mr. Talmage (and toward the sale of that book I give this gratuitous notice), in the preface to which Mr. Talmage says: "I enjoy this world. I suppose I laugh more and laugh louder than almost any other man. * * This world is a rose; this universe a garland." These are his words, and his reviewer thinks this a very singular state of mind for a man who holds and announces the belief that thousands of his fellow men are dropping into hell every day! He thinks that if Mr. Talmage should see a man looking on at a horrible railway accident, and laughing long and loud, he would call him a heartless wretch, and reprove him with no slight indignation. Yet his offense is venial compared with Mr. Talmage's attitude; standing in a lost and dying world, himself with a commission to save, and the eternal destiny of thousands dependent therefore on his faithfulness, yet so little oppressed with a sense of his responsibility as to be able to "laugh more and

louder than most men," and so disengaged in mind as to find "this world a rose, this universe a garland." "I will laugh like a hyena," says Shakespeare. Either Mr. Talmage's laugh is of the hyena kind, or it is like that mentioned by Solomon, "as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughing of the fool." The reviewer, however, thinks that the secret of this laughing is in the fact that there are secured seats in heaven for the orthodox clergy and their friends !

Mr. Talmage, as you may remember in the early part of his sermon, instanced Nero as a specimen "hard case" which Universalism would find it difficult to deal with. He need not have gone so far for his illustration ! Nero fiddled while Rome was burning, but Talmage laughs while a universe is in flames, and while between the rising and the setting sun thousands are dropping into eternal fires ! Considering the differences in the advantages and training of the two men, I consider Mr. Talmage the harder case of the two, yet is not my faith shaken in the efficacy of those corrective punishments which shall finally cause him to "do justly and love mercy and walk humbly" before his God.

We are prepared to expect from the preacher of this discourse, having reviewed him so far, a spirit and temper that falls noticeably short of the New Testament definition of heavenly-mindedness. We learned very early in the review not to look for scholarly exposition, Christian fairness, or even common courtesy ; but rather to expect noisy declamation without argument, and unscrupulous assertion without proof. That we are not to be disappointed in this expectation, witness this further

statement which, that I may do him no injustice, I give in Mr. Talmage's own words :

“ In the New England villages, or the villages of the far West, where there is only one church, and that a Universalist Church, or where the Universalist Church is dominant above all others,—in such villages inevitably and always you find profane swearing, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, lust, and every form of abomination. Give the doctrine of Universalism full swing in any village or city and it consumes it, financially, morally and spiritually ! ”

This insane statement, which, from its inherent incredibility and absurdity, carries its own refutation on its face, would be unworthy of a moment's serious attention were it not that it furnished a vivid illustration of Mr. Talmage's pulpit recklessness, and of the fatuity to which partizan hatred drives him. I can not wholly think that it was a deliberate statement. Although it bears marks of premeditation, I think there is some reason to hope that the preacher was hurried by the exigencies of his extemporaneous discourse into this passionate, ill-contrived, and utterly unfounded slander against the good name and fair fame of a Christian church and people ! Mr. Talmage has fallen under the operation of the law of hatred expounded by the apostle John : “ He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” He has fallen into the snare of allowing himself to make a statement which, even if it were true, he could not possibly know to be true. The testimony of a thousand unimpeachable witnesses would be insufficient to sustain a

libel so comprehensive ; yet he specifies no single instance of the “ financial, moral, and spiritual consumption ” of a city or village by Universalism, presents no witness, and offers no testimony except his own unsupported word ! “ In the villages of New England and of the far West,”—this is as definitely as he will locate the scene of the devastations of Universalism. Where, Mr. Talmage, where ? Will you not name one single village ? No, he will not ! Moreover, I ask you to observe a certain sagacious cowardice in the manner of this slander. “ In the New England villages,” he says, “ and in the villages of the far West, where there is only one church and that a Universalist church, or where the Universalist church is dominant,—in such villages inevitably and always you find profane swearing, drunkenness, sabbath breaking, lust, and every form of abomination.” Now is not that slander cunningly insinuated ? He does not boldly *say* that Universalism *produces* these vices and abominations, but he connects the presence of Universalist churches in villages with the vices that are found in all considerable villages, in such a manner as to lead his hearers to *infer* a relation of cause and effect, which he hesitates to openly charge. Does Mr. Talmage mean to say that these vices are found *only* in those villages where a Universalist church exists ? Why any coward can safely make you such statements by the hour ! Suppose it to be said : “ Mr. Talmage’s Tabernacle is the dominant church in the city of Brooklyn. Yet in that city inevitably and always you will find profane swearing, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, lust—and enough of it—and every form of abomination.” That statement would be strictly and literally true, yet

it would convey a lying insinuation, and convey it in a manner deserving only of contempt. I commend to the Tabernacle preacher this description, by Isaiah, of a state of temper and spirit in which he will find a suggestive analogy : “ He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside that he can not deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand ? ”

As to the substance of this reckless slander, I am thoroughly competent to speak. I am, and for nearly seven years have been, the Secretary of the Universalist General Convention. In my office I know the location of every Universalist church in the United States. And as thoroughly as any non-resident can, I know the material, social, moral, and spiritual status of these churches, their numbers, their organization, their contributions to charitable, reformatory, missionary, and educational objects, their influence on the communities where they are located, the stand they take against the vices of the age, and their attitude in favor of moral reforms, their spiritual zeal as shown by their observance of the Church ordinances and the membership of their churches and Sunday Schools. All these things are matters of record, as well as of public knowledge. And on the strength of this actual knowledge, which is established by the clearest proofs, I declare Mr. Talmage’s statements in derogation of the moral influence of Universalism to be without the shadow of a foundation. They are utterly, comprehensively, absurdly false. More than this, they are the direct converse of the truth. Mr. Talmage might know, if he would, that Universalism is to-day upholding the Bible and Christianity, and stimulating and moulding Christian life and character in re-

gions where the doctrine that he preaches has almost wholly lost its power.

He does know that Universalism enforces the moral law by sanctions far more solemn, imperative, and controlling than any which his doctrine supplies. He preaches a doctrine of compromises, substitutions, and alternatives. Universalism declares the eternal necessity of personal conformity to righteousness. He preaches eternal damnation as an alternative to obedience. Universalism declares that no soul can take refuge in eternal damnation from the necessity of obedience.

Mr. Talmage has been courteously invited to verify the statements made in his sermon. He will not do it, nor attempt it.*

He has made of his pulpit a Coward's Castle. A Coward's Castle is defined to be "that pulpit or that platform from which a man, surrounded by his friends, in the absence of his opponents, secure of applause, and safe from a reply, denounces those who differ from him."

It may be proper to inquire for the motive which has led Mr. Talmage to make such a sorry exhibition of himself. What is it that so lamentably exasperates him? If it is the doctrines of Universalism, let us examine and see if they ought to excite the hostility of any servant of God or well-wisher of men.

Universalism teaches that the purpose and agencies of

* This prediction has been verified. Rev. H. R. Nye, pastor of the First Universalist Church, in Brooklyn—the Church of Our Father—addressed, through the Brooklyn papers, an open letter to Mr. Talmage, courteously requesting him to make good his charges against Universalism, offering his pulpit for that purpose, or to bring his entire congregation to the Tabernacle to hear Mr. Talmage's reply. Neither this letter nor a subsequent one availed to draw Mr. Talmage from his Coward's Castle. He speaks his slander and retreats.

the Divine Government are so potent and resistless as to bring every sinful soul to repentance. Its first word to sinners is therefore the word of Christ, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." At hand, not afar off—a spiritual, real, eternal life. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Mr. Talmage, on the contrary, believes that the Divine Government is under such limitations that it will save but a part (an almost infinitely minute part, if salvation is confined to this life and to the visible earthly sphere and operation of Christianity) and doom the rest to measureless despair and eternal ruin.

Universalism teaches that the moral and spiritual progress and possibilities of man are not confined to this life, this opening stage of an eternal existence, a stage so unequal in its conditions and duration, as to defy all attempts to reconcile it with Divine justice if it is a final probation. Mr Talmage teaches that this life *is* a final probation; and sets up official conditions of salvation, one result of which is to people hell with some of the most royal and saintly souls of earth.

Universalism teaches that salvation is personal righteousness, the essential condition of any permanent happiness or power in any world, and to be gained by the help of Christ, the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, the church, prayer, the law of retribution, and many minor agencies. Mr. Talmage teaches that salvation is in vicarious or imputed righteousness, which can be gained by a miraculous intervention at the very latest moment of any ill-spent life, and which must be gained here or not at all.

Universalism seeks to remove from human belief, as a sanction of morality, the unfounded, inexplicable, undemonstrable dogma of an endless hell, of a hopeless, unbeneificial, motiveless eternity of torment,—a dogma which, where it is believed, can only excite an animal, irrational, short-lived terror ; which makes men indeed pliable in the hands of priests, but which tends of itself to no rational amendment of life ; which leads men to confound salvation from sin with safety from the pains of hell ; a dogma of animalism and sensuousness which confuses things physical and spiritual, and tends to degrade the pursuit of eternal righteousness into a mere selfish scramble for personal safety ; a dogma according to which sin is to be dreaded in proportion as it brings pain, and *because* it brings pain, which sees no intrinsic righteousness in Right, goodness in Good, or evil in Evil ; a dogma that “seeks to make men virtuous by directing their gaze into the mouth of a furnace and to whip souls into heaven with a lash of fire !”

Universalism proposes to substitute for this, as part, and part only of the sanctions of morality, a rational fear of the inevitable consequences of wrong-doing ; consequences governed by law, certain and inexorable ; and continuing until wrong-doing is abandoned and the sinful disposition is eradicated. Universalism substitutes for the dogma of endless hell, with its unscripturalness, its unreasonableness, its sorry practical results on mankind for twelve hundred years, the doctrine of retribution by law, founded in eternal justice and truth. For a moral government of practical injustice, caprice, and favoritism,—an irresponsible despotism, it substitutes a government of Law and Order ; which is

not a mere temporary expedient—God's afterthought to rescue a ruined world, but the plan of Eternal Wisdom for the development, education, and moral perfection of the race. And wherever this doctrine is preached, the intellectual enlightenment which it first brings is followed by moral improvement, by a deeper sense of present duty and responsibility, an increasing perception of divine sanctions, of the sinfulness of sin and the beauty of holiness, of the sweetness and power of the Christian life. Why, when I think of what Universalists are doing and have done, when I look at the great names that are on the rolls of the church, when I remember the faithful labors of its ministry and its laity through years of misconception and persecution, when I consider what its contribution has been and is to the beneficent reforms of the age, when I see the genuine personal morality that it cultivates and the Christian piety which it evokes, and when I see what a broad light it throws upon the mysteries of Providence, and what its power is to enlighten and inspire—when I think of these things, I will not exalt Universalism unduly, nor boast of my religion, but I say with the Apostle Paul, “No man shall stop me of *this* boasting”: Universalism is the “power of God unto salvation.”

And if Mr. Talmage wants to know what that doctrine is which unfixes and unsettles the very foundation of human morality, I can tell him. It is the doctrine of a substituted, vicarious righteousness; a doctrine which teaches man that he has neither the power nor the opportunity to fulfill the strict demands of God's law; that therefore its requirements have been fulfilled for him in condescension to his inherent worthlessness; that he can ap-

propriate the obedience of another by faith, and satisfy the requirements of justice at the end of his days of wickedness by a death-bed repentance. Now justice lies at the foundation of morality. Teach a man that it is just for man or God to punish the innocent for the guilty, and let the guilty go free, and you have undermined the very corner-stone of morality. Then if you add to this doctrine the idea of a mechanical, official salvation, a salvation conveyed by a drop of water on the forehead, by the sign of the cross, by a muttered confession in the agony of death, conveyed or withheld at the pleasure of the church, priest, or minister,—you teach men this, and you pervert the sense of justice, blunt the edge of conscience, and keep the world in a whirl of moral confusion.

I will tell Mr Talmage what is an immoral spectacle—a spectacle often witnessed of the degradation of our “popular theology.” It is the spectacle of such a man as Anton Probst, the murderer in cold blood of a family of seven, addressing his fellow men from the gallows’ platform with a condescending invitation to meet him in heaven! Quick as lightning the question comes, “Where are this man’s seven victims while he speaks?” They didn’t fulfill the conditions of an official salvation. No priest or minister came to their dying bed; they could fulfill nothing; they were dispatched with an axe in the dead of night, without warning, no space granted for repentance, sent to their last account with all their imperfections on their heads—sent there by the hands of this very man who now leaps from the gallows platform into the paradise of God!

If you want immoral teaching, if you want a spectacle

calculated to confuse men's minds utterly as to what eternal justice and right are, look on that picture ! It is not a spectacle furnished by the Universalist Church, but furnished by that theology, the denial of which Mr. Talmage stigmatizes as immoral.

It may here properly be asked how Universalism deals with the dying sinner. I answer, With the truth—aiming to produce a repentance “not to be repented of.” Repentance is always the first step toward salvation, but no repentance is genuine that is based on the desire to elude or escape the just consequences of wrong-doing. Universalism, in the cell of the condemned murderer, aims first of all to produce a real sense of the wrong that has been done, a sense so true, keen, and quick as to raise in the condemned man's soul that intense, overwhelming desire to right the wrong, which is the only sign of true repentance.

Instead of being willing to go to heaven while his victim is in hell, the truly repentant murderer will pray, “Let me take his place, and expiate in my own person the wrong I have done him. Let no man be punished for what I have done. I have sinned before heaven and against this man. Give me the opportunity, through any service or pain, to make this great wrong right. I see what my sin is, not in its consequences alone, but in itself, and my awakened conscience can never find joy or peace till I have undone the evil.”

To this genuine repentance Universalism answers : Through God's justice and grace you shall have the opportunity.

Then the murderer appears on the scaffold to meet his doom, not addressing the amazed witnesses with the

condescending invitation to meet him in heaven, but saying: "Take warning by me. So low has my sin brought me that I embrace with joy the fate which you shudder at. Through this human judgment I fall into the hands of Divine Justice. I go, through what labor, humiliation, and sorrow I know not, to repair the wrong I have done, knowing that I shall never find peace till that is accomplished."

Such sentiments from the lips of a dying murderer will fall upon the witnessing hearts and consciences like that very word of God which is "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow."

A fitful gratitude for an unjust and fictitious deliverance is a poor safeguard against the stress of human passion, and a miserably inadequate substitute in the human heart for a cultivated and deepening sense of eternal moral obligations.

Many of you have doubtless seen the well-known tract, containing an account of the conversion, by Bishop Burnet, of Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester; who was a kind of English James Fisk, with advantages. That is, he had the advantage of being an educated man, and he had a title. He was simply the most profligate man of the profligate times of Charles II. He died at the age of thirty-four, an old man, worn out by his vices and excesses, and his mind, as his biographer tells us, was considerably shattered. The attention of Bishop Burnet was directed to him, and moved no doubt as Collyer says, by the pity of a noble mind, and moved also, no doubt, by the desire to convert one who was at once an infidel

and an earl, the Bishop visited him. And this tract tells us, as the result of this visit, that this man repented and was forgiven, that he died in peace and went to heaven, and this was an unequaled triumph of God's grace.

Now, I no more doubt that Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, is, or will be saved, than I doubt the existence of Almighty God, of His power, of His justice. or His love. But to set that man at once, without expiation of his offenses or rectification of his character, singing at the foot of the great white throne, while the women that he ruined were walking through the London streets down to hell, while there were a hundred homes in England where broken-hearted mothers sat mourning for daughters beguiled by him, while the songs written by him were just setting out to do their damning work upon generations yet unborn,—to see all this mischief and wrong flowing from that one man, and then to picture him as a glorified saint in paradise, with no care or thought for what he had done, basking in the sunlight of God's favor—I say that to give this as an illustration of the Divine Government is to utterly confound every sentiment of justice and every principle of morality. “Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions.”

It is this teaching that discredits all religion in the minds of intelligent, thoughtful, observing, honorable men. It is this that disjoins Religion from Morality, divorces Piety from Honesty, separates Salvation from Righteousness.

Men trade on their religion, and speculate on their chances of paradise, driving a sharp bargain with their Saviour with as keen a relish as with their business rival.

"Show me," says Froude, "a nation whose trade is dishonest, and I will show you a people whose religion is a sham." Mr. Talmage talks about the "infinite sham of modern Universalism." The religion which this Brooklyn preacher scorns will save this age from the scorn of times to come. Mr. Talmage is preaching a system of doctrine which was once, when backed by an intense moral earnestness, effective against unrighteousness, but which now, outgrown and outworn, is a fatal barrier to personal rectitude ; no longer credible to human intelligence nor answering to human needs, and, having lost its life and force, its maintenance from the pulpit makes religion more and more an unreality in daily life. It is this that lifts the pressure of eternal duty from the souls of men ; and it is this absence of life and reality in the dogmas that has sent one branch of the church to Rationalism and the other to Sacerdotalism, and gives over all between these extremes to the reign of Sentimentalism. When the living spirit of religion is hot in men's hearts, they do not spend their time and strength in mere scholastic definitions nor in puerile disputes about rites, ceremonies, and genuflexions.

But when doctrines are insisted upon which can no longer be believed, and the church, perceiving that it has lost its hold upon the intellect, directs its remaining strength to arousing the religious emotions which, when awakened, it can not guide, then comes the era of Sentimentalism. Religion becomes a flaccid, boneless body. Men like Talmage strive in vain to resuscitate a dead superstition ; "liberal" orthodoxy betakes itself to sentiment, sacerdotalism breaks out in new discussions of tallow-chandlery and millinery, furnishing and postur-

ing, rationalism erects the Church of the Divine Uncertainty and instals as pastor the Rev. Dr. Dubious, veteran ghouls like Hammond denote themselves to frightening babies into the kingdom, Moody and Sankey go abroad and Varley comes abroad, because "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country," Romanism begins openly to grasp at secular power; and meanwhile the tide of business, political and social immorality rises higher.

There is need of a church that shall recall humanity to the fact that Righteousness is eternal life, that shall reassert the indissoluble relation between sowing and reaping; and emphasize anew the eternal moral necessity that connects well-being with well-doing.

Our civil war, which did so many things, opened men's eyes to the woful inefficiency of the creed Mr. Talmage preaches to meet the actual exigencies of life, and cover the facts of human experience.

The necessity of an official salvation was utterly ignored during the war. Remember the hosts of young men who left their homes at the call of their country, at what they deemed the call of duty, marched to the battle-field and laid down their lives at the altar of liberty.

The whole broad land is dotted with their graves. They sleep among the everglades of Florida, on the banks of the muddy Mississippi, under the shadow of the blue Virginia hills.

They lie where they fell, thousands upon thousands, with their faces to the foe.

"On Fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead!"

But what of their souls? What of their eternal destiny?

The fatal bullet, so unseen and so swift, left them no time for that official repentance which Mr. Talmage declares essential to salvation. They died, thousands of them, unconverted, unregenerated, and doomed, by the direct teachings of his creed, to hopeless, irrecoverable, immitigable damnation. Yet, when those sad burdens, those oblong boxes that we learned to know so well, came from the bloody battle-fields to seek burial at the birth-place, near peaceful country homes, in quiet churchyards, did the preachers, called upon to speak the words of trust and hope, did they mount their pulpits and preach the doctrines of their creed? Not so. The war had brought out realities, and the spirit awakened was too deep and true to tolerate for an instant the infinite falsehood of the dogmas. The ministers ignored their creeds, and spoke instead the word of the living God. They grew eloquent upon the glory and rewards of sacrifice, they magnified true manhood, they exalted patriotism, they comforted sorrow-stricken hearts with the very word and spirit of Christ! Brought face to face with the intense realities of that time, the inadequate, irrational, futile dogma broke down utterly. Why, when our honored and beloved chief magistrate was done to death by the hand of an assassin (an assassin whose offered repentance Mr. Talmage would have been bound to accept, and whom, by the terms of his creed and the practices of his life he would have dismissed with a shout of "glory" to that Paradise from which, by the terms of the same creed, his victim was forever excluded;)—when Abraham Lincoln was shot,

he lay for a time in utter unconsciousness,—he died and made no sign! He received his death wound in a theatre, the very place of all others which Mr. Talmage holds in abomination, and attendance upon which he declares to be a sign of unregeneracy. He was well known to be an unbeliever in the common theology, he fulfilled not a single condition of that preparation for death which Mr. Talmage declares absolutely essential to salvation. Insist upon this Brooklyn preacher's doctrine being applied in this case with the same strictness with which he applies it in other cases, and Abraham Lincoln went to hell, is there now, and will be there forever! Yet, on the Sunday following that fateful Friday, did Mr. Talmage ascend his pulpit, shrouded, as were all our pulpits, with the black tokens of a nation's woe—and, in the face of grief as true and fervent as ever followed the exit of mortal man from this stage of being, did he talk of endless damnation and announce the doctrines that he now so bravely flaunts in the light of day? Here was an opportunity, such as occurs but once in a man's lifetime! Here was an illustrious example of downfall, an awfully solemn and impressive warning! Did Mr. Talmage use it? No, and for his life he dared not! Stern, strong men were bowed in grief, stirred to their innermost depths with that sorrow that rejects all shams and sees reality! Nobler emotions and diviner intuitions were in the ascendant then, and Mr. Talmage's futile dogma would have been swept away like chaff before a hurricane of righteous scorn! And so, here again, as it has in thousands of less conspicuous instances, as it always has and always will when brought under any test of reality, the old dogma broke down.

Moreover—and let this be closely observed—if Mr. Talmage's doctrine is true—if the eternal, unchangeable destiny of every human soul is fixed before that soul leaves this mortal body, and if that destiny is dependent wholly upon the official acceptance of Christ *in this state*—if this razor-edged dogma stands at the gate of death, dividing the great stream of humanity that rolls toward eternity into two branches forever—if this is a true account of the method and purpose of the Divine Government, then it follows that already nine-tenths of all God's creatures are settled in interminable torments, here at the very threshold of eternity, and that this overwhelming ruin represents the best He can or will do for them; it follows that hell is peopled with some of the best, and heaven with some of the worst of God's children. Apply Mr. Talmage's tests of salvation, and if Nero and Robespierre are in hell, so also are Abraham Lincoln and Charles Sumner, and if Howard and Wilberforce are in heaven, so also are Cesar Borgia and Lord Rochester, Anton Probst, Martha Grinder, the Pittsburg poisoner, and a host of others to whom murder and the gallows have proved the gateway to Paradise! In Mr. Talmage's system morality has no necessary connection with salvation, nor immorality with damnation. Righteousness is "filthy rags," "official faith" dissevers the relation of well-doing and well-being, overturns the moral order of the universe, and blinds and reverses even the discriminating justice of Almighty God! Arnold, of Rugby, said that the "evangelical system, as conceived by the masses, was undubtedly false." But this Brooklyn preacher imposes on the masses a false conception, even of the evangelical system, which in his hands be-

comes a complicated contrivance for enabling men to sin and escape the punishment of sin! He multiplies the terrors of hell, but quadruples the easy means of escape from it.

And when you seriously consider who and what the saved are, and who and what the lost are, on Mr. Talmage's theory, as he applies it, heaven and hell exchange functions and aspects—the one loses all attraction, the other all terror;—the companionship of such lost souls seems more desirable than that of such saints, and all moral distinctions between reward and punishment are canceled.

Fortunately, however, the intrinsic worth and goodness of many souls resist the corrosion of such dogmas, and the Christian life and graces bloom in every communion, not through an intellectual apprehension of such absurd theories of the Divine Government, but by contact with the living spirit of Christ.

It is no part of my purpose or spirit to retort upon Mr. Talmage the weak and unworthy charges that he has made. Happily, he does in no true sense represent the Christian denomination whose name he bears. There are hundreds of able and faithful ministers, and thousands of sweet and noble souls in that church, whose contempt for such utterances would fully equal mine.

IV.—SOUL SAVING.

Mr. Talmage further charges that Universalism is “deadening to all effort at soul-saving.” He asks, “What is the matter with a great many of our Protestant churches to-day? Why, they have got this disease of Universalism in a milder form.” This saying explains Mr. Talmage's sermon, and exposes the secret of his in-

temperate and unprovoked attack. "What is the reason," he asks, "that we don't have more conversions in our churches?" and his answer intimates that "the disease of Universalism" has attacked the pulpit as well as the pews. He warns his ministerial brethren thus: "Swinnett said a thing that made me quake, body and mind and soul, when I first heard it. He says, 'It is an awful thing to fall into hell from under the pulpit, but, ah! what an awful thing to fall into hell out of the pulpit!'"

It seems to me that there is one thing worse even than that, Mr. Talmage, and that is to have hell rise into the pulpit. There is no doubt that the orthodox defection from Mr. Talmage's favorite dogma is more extensive than even his alarmed vision perceives. But he should discriminate. The man who simply rejects the doctrine of endless punishment, falls, not into Universalism, but into Sentimentalism. You can not "fall" out of orthodoxy into Universalism. You have got to rise! Universalism is not a system of inert negations, it is a most weighty and solemn affirmation of God's resistless purpose to have every soul which He has made a righteous soul at last! From this invincible necessity hell releases no man. God "will have all men to be saved." All the potencies of His moral government are framed for that, and will accomplish that. Man's alternative is not in the final result, but in the means. He can achieve his destiny by the royal way of Faith and Obedience, Christ being his Guide and Teacher, and the Holy Spirit his Inspirer, or, rejecting this, and falling into the iron mechanism of the retributive laws, he will be brought to repentance and obedience by pain, and "saved, so as by fire." It is the orthodox sentimentalist who launches

himself on the vague hope that "things will finally come right," without special effort and purpose, through the "grandmotherly" goodness of God. The Universalist knows that "things" have got to be *made right*, that the use of the means is as imperative as the end is certain, that man is as necessarily the active agent in the achievement of righteousness as he is in the achievement of an education; that he must "work out his own salvation," *because* it is "God who worketh in him, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." And the Universalist further perceives that this unescapable and inexorable necessity of righteousness which is laid upon him is not the issue of fate, wrath, or indifference, but is the determinate counsel of that perfect wisdom which perceives, and that perfect love which desires the absolute best for man. Thus the Divine intention and his own perception coincide. Right ceases to be relative to pain, and becomes absolute; right because eternally right; best because everlastingly best. And there can be no doctrine proclaimed to mankind that exerts so steady and persistent a pressure upon the conscience, or that brings so potent and noble an inspiration to the heart as that Universalism which the Tabernacle preacher describes as "withering to all effort at soul-saving."

Mr. Talmage's idea of "soul-saving" is thus defined by himself: "Oh, my soul, wake up! there is a hell, and it is our place to keep men out of it." Precisely. And throughout his sermon he thus confounds salvation with safety, security against penalty with enfranchisement from sin. And the peril which he thinks the great peril of life, the one great danger with which he threatens men, is precisely the one danger to which no subject of

God's perfect government can ever be exposed—the danger, namely, of being left in endless rebellion in endless pain. He offers man an alternative; God offers no alternative. He offers a compromise; God offers no compromise. “By Myself have I sworn.” He says, in effect, that man can take refuge in hell forever from the necessity of repentance and obedience; and this is in fact the alternative which thousands of desperate, reckless, sin-enfeebled souls are to-day contemplating without being moved by it to a single effort at reformation. Some are thinking, “I will repent by and by;” some, “No hell can be worse than this;” some, “I shall not have to do anything there, that will end all.” “Brethren,” said a minister (of the strictest sect) who had become enslaved by drink, to those who came to remonstrate with him, “Brethren, it is in vain! I understand this matter better than you do. I know that I am going to endless torment, but I can not, and I will not stop!” When a soul rises, even in ruin, to such a majesty of defiance, scorning both obedience and terror, orthodoxy can say no more—your “two destinies” man is dumb, he can only urge his false alternative, and reiterate his futile threat. But Universalism comes, saying, “Your defiance is utterly vain, there is but one refuge for you in all the worlds of God, and that is obedience. If it requires the fire of ten hells to melt your stubbornness, or the pain of fifty hells to stimulate your besotted will, then that fire and pain will come, for you are in the hands of a God who will have His way, will have you clean, will have you right! “Doctor,” said a man in Baltimore lately, a confirmed opium-eater, and dying of the habit, “Doctor, it is not perdition that I fear; I would willingly face the

accumulated wrath of Almighty God, and take all the agonies of hell fused into one pang, rather than spend eternity without opium!" The sin-habit is the opium-habit of the soul, and no weak proffer of alternatives, no vain threats of hopeless pain, can cure it. Ah! Mr. Talmage, when you approach a sinful soul, lost to all higher appeals, in whom what we call free-will has become bond-will, when, as you so often do, you have fruitlessly exhausted the terrors of "damnation," drop your fable, and preach the resistless terror of restoration! An immortal soul, rooted in utter despair, is strong, but God is stronger! Surround that soul with the awfulness of omnipotence! Nor time, nor space, nor pain, shall offer refuge for sin. Let the absolute imperative speak, "You must be clean!" "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Then add that this resistless mandate is not the issue of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable wrath, but is the relentless purpose of an Infinite love, and you have encircled that soul with the *real* "terror of the Lord."

But Mr. Talmage seems unable to see that man is in any danger worth mentioning, unless he is in danger of endless hell, or that there is anything in particular to save men from, if not from an "eternal catastrophe." He asks, "What did Paul mean when he feared becoming a castaway? Cast away on what coast? The coast of everlasting love? It could not have been on the coast of everlasting love." Why not? Mr. Talmage. Love has a more sure and relentless purpose than hatred; love can inflict sharper pains than wrath; love can devise and execute a more stringent and effective discipline than anger. Paul had been a castaway once, and had

found it hard to "kick against the pricks." The goodness of God had led him to repentance, but he still had a "thorn in the flesh," an unsubdued Adam, and he prayed to be delivered "from the body of this death." But he had learned to "glory in tribulations," because tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." He knew he might be a castaway again if he did not keep his body under and bring it into subjection; but he also knew that he could not become a castaway forever, for he said: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul knew he was *safe* from eternal torments, yet he knew he was not *saved*, for he said: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. * * I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul felt that he had enough to do to stimulate all his faculties to their highest exercise, yet the fear of endless hell was utterly absent from him. He saw the *real* danger that beset himself and all mankind, the danger of continuing in sin, of the absence of goodness, the inherent foulness of vice, the pain and loss of disobedience, the degradation and shame of sensualism, the absence of light and power, peace and joy that must ensue so long as sin held dominion; all these perils Paul had a most quick and lively sense of;

and he also saw the rewards of righteousness, the fruit of the spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and he besought his brethren, not by their fear of endless damnation, but "by the mercies of God," to present their "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," which was their "reasonable service." He had an overmastering sense of the "goodness and severity" of God, of the strictness of the Divine retributions. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;"—yet he coupled this with no reference to an endless hell. In short, he found a sphere of the most faithful and beneficent activity, and the motives and sanctions of the strictest virtue and the most exalted spiritual endeavor, in a circle from which was excluded all reference to an "eternal catastrophe."

Yet the same lack in the Universalist system leads Mr. Talmage to characterize it as "withering to all effort at soul-saving." From which I infer that he believes that if there were no endless hell before his eyes, he too would become dead to all effort at "soul-saving." In other words, if there is no endless hell to save men from, then there is nothing under the worn-out heavens for Mr. Talmage to do! His occupation is gone. He will go and sit on the hillside with Jonah, over against Nineveh, watching to see the destruction he has prophesied, and when it comes not, he will say, "It is better for me to die than to live!"

The Lord Jesus was content to "save his people from their *sins*;" he said: "I am come that they might have *life*, and have it more abundantly." He announced his

mission thus: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He said: "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." He said: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." But all this to Mr. Talmage would be "withering to all effort at soul-saving." Nothing can excite his ambition unless he be allowed to usurp the prerogative and function of omnipotence, and deal with and control the final, eternal destiny of men! Wholly unsatisfied to exercise in his sphere the legitimate influence of one quite, fallible human being upon another, entirely unstimulated by the honor which Paul deemed his highest glory, of being a "worker together with God," an "ambassador for Christ," Mr. Talmage, of Brooklyn, stalks as a dictator into the council-chamber of Him, before whom angels bow and archangels veil their faces, and says, in effect: "I can not be stimulated to any effort for the welfare of my fellow-creatures unless you will commit to my hands their final, eternal destiny!" With what would be a huge presumption, an infinite impertinence, were it not for the ludicrous contrast between the exility of the proffered means, and the immensity of the proposed end, Mr. Talmage announces his "business" to be that of a "soul-saver." And within what narrow, official, mechanical conception does he confine the magnificent process of that development, discipline, and education of immortal souls which is the

real meaning of "salvation!" The Brooklyn preacher seems to conceive this life as a vast arena, into which a relentless God is perpetually thrusting millions of immortal souls, crude, raw, hampered, weak, ignorant, passionate, disabled by hereditary taint, and by baffling conditions, prone to all evil, born under an infinite curse, saying, as He does so: "You are to endure forever, but this life is your only and final probation. You will here fix your eternal condition of happiness or torment." And so He pours them continually into a world where the devil has been settled for six thousand, and the Christ but two thousand years; so He pours them in, the blind, halt, lame, maimed, possessed, impotent; some of them into regions where Christ has been heard of, but more into regions as utterly sequestered from his influence as though they were on another planet; some of them knowing, but the vast majority utterly ignorant, even of the conditions imposed upon them; the probation of some lasting for years, that of others for hours only, and then the myriad host is gathered before the judgment-seat and consigned, the many to infinite torment, the few to enduring felicity! This, I say, seems to be Mr. Talmage's conception of the character of God, the methods of His government, the processes of His salvation and the results of his work! Among the saved we shall find the happy few whose fortunate lot it was to live in Brooklyn and be cast within the range of the Tabernacle preacher's potent influence; among the eternally lost we shall find all those who believed better things of their Creator, who worshiped Him as the all-wise, all-just, and all-good, who believed their Bibles, trusted and loved their Saviour, prayed for the Holy

Spirit to lead them into all truth, and strove thus to enter into the "eternal life" of righteousness!

For nothing less than this can Mr. Talmage intend when he brings his final charge against Universalism, that it is "the means of eternal catastrophe to a great many;" and again, he says: "If we let it (Universalism) alone, it will ruin half the race." "If *we* let it alone." Who are the *we*? Why, Mr. Talmage and his brethren! Ah! then, upon Mr. Talmage and his brethren hangs the eternal destiny of half the race! Hear this and tremble, you who have believed that your eternal destiny was in the hands of God and Christ! Christ is no longer your Saviour! Mr. Talmage has left Him dead upon the field; as witness the following extraordinary and most blasphemous figure: "Will you hurl Him (Christ) on his back, trample on Him, putting one foot on His holy brow, and the other on His mangled heart, and from the corpse of a murdered Christ, will you leap into hell?"

Mr. Talmage has spoken of the "demoralizing" influence of Universalism; but you may behold in this utterance the brutalizing influence of his dogma upon himself. A figure of rhetoric is indeed not to be tried by the rules of logic; but an impassioned utterance such as this is strictly logical in its revelation of the state of the mind and imagination of the speaker; and I venture to say that so wholly sensual and utterly revolting a conception can scarcely be paralleled, even among those products of a besotted imagination—the miracle and passion-plays of the dark ages. What conceptions of the Divine nature and spiritual functions of the Lord Jesus can spring from the rank soil of so debased and sensualized an im-

agination? What true picture of God can be formed on so diseased and inflamed a retina? or what rays of the light of eternal justice and goodness can be truly transmitted through so turbid and discolored a medium?

Mr. Talmage's entire sermon bears witness to the capital defect here illustrated. It is a coarse, vulgar, irrational and unwarrantable attack, not upon the doctrines of Universalism alone, but upon the moral character of its teachers and professors, a weak and false aspersion of the good name and fair fame of a Christian church and people. As I have shown you, it begins with perversion and misrepresentation, continues in fallacy and curious and almost comical logical obliquity, and ends as such a beginning prophecies and necessitates. In taking my leave of it, I am heartily glad to avow my conviction that it is representative of nothing, save its author. And my only apology for the prominence I have given it, is that it furnished a dark back-ground on which to sketch, in vivid contrast, the outlines of a rational and Christian faith.

V.—TWO DESTINIES.

In closing this discourse, I revert to the final charge, that Universalism is the "means of eternal catastrophe to a great many;" not for the charge's sake (for if God's character is such that He will damn half His creatures for believing the best of Him, there can be no possible guarantee that He will not damn the other half for believing the worst of Him), but for the sake of exposing the gospel-varnished Paganism which lurks under this and all similar vaticinations of "eternal catastrophe," and which vitiates and enfeebles the whole

body of so-called Christian theology. For the only "catastrophe" which can occur in a God-governed universe, is the "catastrophe" of the final, complete accomplishment of that God's will. And whoever contemplates "two destinies" for the subjects of that government, the one of fixed, immitigable, unalterable Evil, and the other of final Good, contemplates nothing less than the eternal dominion in this universe of *two* opposite and antagonistic powers, who can be only in a mechanical and official sense domiciled in one person.

Either the distinction which we maintain between Good and Evil is fallacious, or the eternal perpetuation of Evil involves an eternal antagonism between two rival and contending Potencies, neither of whom can ever exclude the other, and neither of whom by consequence can ever be God or supreme. And this is dualism, pure and simple. And on any "two destinies" view of the Divine government, monotheism is impossible. If there be an absolutely Supreme Being, He will have His way, and it avails nothing to allege that His will is perfectly fulfilled in the endless damnation of a portion of His creatures. That is simply to discharge the essential nature of evil, by saying that, being the will of God, endless damnation is on the whole good. But either endless damnation is an evil, or it is not. If it is not, it is not to be dreaded, and is not a "catastrophe." If it is, and is executed and perpetuated by the will of God, then evil is seated in the very bosom of God, and is an essential part of the Divine nature; the eternal conflict goes on there, and you have simply chased the problem to the confines of the Divine nature, there to leave it. Reason backward from any

theory of human destiny that contemplates the endless perpetuation of evil, and you reach the same dilemma, from which the only escape is in dualism. To allege "free-will" as perpetuating evil eternally, is only to change the form of the dilemma. A will free to perpetuate evil eternally, is an independent, potent, and successful antagonist to God, and gives the necessary dualistic adversary. A will freely perpetuating evil, and yet doing it in accordance with the will of God, is making God's will the sanction of evil, and that throws the conflict back again into the Divine nature. In brief, the existence of eternal evil negatives the existence of a Supreme Being, unless Evil is that Supreme Being.

Therefore, a belief in eternal punishment is inconsistent with belief in a Supreme Being. And, in fact, the mediæval creeds of Christendom are not monotheistic. The theory of a triune God is, in this respect, a futile, mechanical device for hiding the problem of evil in a maze of interchangeable persons and relations. But even that device did not answer the demands of the problem, without a fourth person, a Devil. And an eternalized Devil is a necessity to the doctrine of eternal torments, and is practically believed in by those who hold that doctrine. But this furnishes the eternal antagonist, and brings us around again to dualism. It avails not to limit his power, if you do not change his nature. He is the eternal antagonist to God still, successful and defiant, and God is not Supreme.

I say again, that this pagan fallacy lurks in every creed that teaches eternal punishment, and that only on the theory of Universalism can a rational belief in one Supreme Being be maintained. If the Devil is Su-

preme, universal damnation will be the result of his rule ; he will perpetuate evil. If God is Supreme, universal salvation will be the result of His government ; He will extinguish evil. But if both eternal Good and eternal Evil is to be the result of such government as there is, then there is no Supreme Being, but two antagonistic rulers, unconquering but unconquerable, maintaining an eternal warfare. Only on such a theory can Mr. Talmage's idea of an "eternal catastrophe" be maintained.

And this idea of "two destinies" and "eternal catastrophe," this pagan defect in the Christian idea of the Supreme God is what vitiates and enfeebles the moral power of the creeds that harbor it. They offer man "two destinies," and millions of sin-hardened or sin-enfeebled souls accept the worse destiny, without a tremor of conscience, and go on their sinful way. They offer a final alternative to obedience—God offers none ! They offer a delusive compromise by means of official faith and substituted righteousness, and millions of souls accept that compromise with a spasm of evanescent gratitude, which supplies the only moral force this theory has ; and divide into two classes, the one led forward into actual obedience by awakened love, the other benumbing conscience by the practice of official obedience and perfunctory rites through life, and awakening in the next life to find that their rank, power and happiness are determined there, not by their official belief, but by their character.

To this "catastrophe"—not an "eternal" one, but one of the greatest that can befall a blinded and deluded soul, is Mr. Talmage contributing in this sermon. "If

I have tormented you with a flaming sword, it was only to show you the Refuge." Precisely. He has alleged the impossibility of righteousness, and magnified the terrors of hell, to scare them into the acceptance of an official salvation. He offers a compromise where God offers no compromise. And much of this pitiful and disastrous disjunction of morality from religion, so visible and so ruinous in our official, business, and social life, is the result of this delusive compromise, relaxing the consciences of thousands who deem themselves religious and "saved" men. And operating through all this doctrine, and the secret of its defective moral power, is this christianized paganism of "two powers," "two destinies," a compromise offered, a final alternative possible.

Universalism comes, concentrating all the potency of omnipotence upon the consciences of men. To the sinner: "Utterly vain and hopeless is your rebellion. Depart from evil, or it will be torn from you in pain and sore distress. No compromise, no final alternative is possible; you struggle against omnipotence; you must be clean. Your one destiny is Righteousness. Through corrective penalty and dire anguish, if you choose that way, deepening and intensifying till endurance is exhausted and the stubborn will subdued, you must accomplish that destiny. Turn now, and turning, find that the same force that resisted your disobedience, now helps your obedience, for it is inexorable and relentless love through all. The stream that ran against you, runs with you. Christ is your helper, and your final victory is certain."

Universalism is a lens which brings to a focus in the conscience of man, all rays that emanate from a Perfect Su-

preme Being. And the sin-hardened or sin-enfeebled soul which can, and often does, stolidly resist that last resource of orthodoxy, the threat of endless damnation, can be utterly overwhelmed and brought to its knees in repentance by that constraining "terror of the Lord," the unescapable, inexorable, absolute, eternal necessity of restoration. No human conscience can throw off *that* pressure. It is the grasp of Omnipotence! "The Lord will not cast off forever." "God will have all men to be saved." Righteousness is eternal life. Perfect conformity to a perfect moral order is the one issue to the Divine Government—the one, sole destiny of man.

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

PULLMAN'S REPLY TO TALMAGE.



A REVIEW OF A SERMON BY THE REV. T. DE WITT
TALMAGE, ENTITLED "THE BIBLE
VS. UNIVERSALISM."

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